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Local pg 4

NSBI buying Olympic tickets — with public money

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Sports pg 22



Anthony, local players shine in QMJHL

SMU infidelity study a top sex story of 2009

SCIENCE A study led by a Saint Mary's University professor has been named one of the most provocative sex science stories of 2009 by the science website LiveScience.com.

The study, led by psychology professor Maryann Fisher, looked into how men and women would feel if they cheated on their partner.

The research concluded that men feel guiltier following sexual infidelity, while women feel guiltier after an emotional transgression. Fisher and her team had hypothesized the opposite. **METRO HALIFAX**



PHILIP CROUCHER/METRO HALIFAX

Halifax Regional Police were at the scene of a shooting yesterday afternoon at Bayers Park Apartments in west-end Halifax.

Shot man won't talk

Police say victim not helping investigation into west-end attack

PHILIP CROUCHER
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A 23-year-old man who apparently suffered a gunshot wound to the face in an afternoon shooting in west-end Halifax yesterday isn't co-operating with police.

Halifax Regional Police spokesman Const. Brian Palmeter said they were called to the Petro Canada on Bayers Road at 1:32 p.m. after the victim went inside the store and told staff he had been shot.

Police believe the actual shooting took place minutes earlier at the Bayers Park Apartments behind the gas station at 6969 Bayers Rd.

Palmeter said the victim suffered an "apparent single gunshot wound" in the common area inside the multi-level complex.

"We definitely don't believe this is a random incident," Palmeter said, adding the victim is known to them. "We do believe the victim knows his assailant and he's not co-operating with police at this time."

Palmeter would only say the victim's injuries were non-life threatening.

But Fairview resident Brian Clark told Metro as he was walking up Bayers Road to the Halifax Shopping Centre, he saw a man with a cut on his face walking in the opposite direction towards the gas station.

"When I looked at him I thought it was just a cut on the side of his face. He must have gotten winged or something (by the bullet)," Clark said, adding blood was coming down his shirt.

At the apartment building, several officers and police dogs were in the back looking for evidence. They could also be seen speaking to several residents.

One resident, who wouldn't give his name, told Metro he heard through other tenants that a man was seen running from the building after the shooting.

Mayor ready for another dive into city's harbour

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Mayor Peter Kelly says he'll be diving back into Halifax harbour this summer — and he wants you to join him.

"I'd invite all your readers, and anyone else who wishes, to get back in with me," Kelly told Metro Halifax yesterday.

Raw sewage has been flowing into the harbour since January, when HRM's main sewage treatment facility was damaged in a flood. The facility is scheduled to be back up and running by May, along with two others in Dartmouth and Herring Cove, and Kelly predicted by mid-summer, "the harbour will be cleaner than it has ever been."



Mayor Peter Kelly

The mayor's last dip in August 2008 was widely publicized. Just one week later, however, the same beach was closed down due to elevated levels of fecal coliform. "I think (another swim) will certainly lead the way in terms of accepting the harbour as swimmable and able to be used for recreational purposes," he said.

News on the Move
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Entertainment pg 28



Trends of the decade

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SCANLIFE

Local



Free bridge travel on Dec. 25

Halifax Harbour Bridges is once again getting into the holiday spirit by announcing that on Friday — Christmas Day — travel on both the MacDonald and MacKay bridges will be free for all vehicles. The cost to travel across each bridge is normally 75 cents. "Providing free travel on the bridges Christmas Day is a tradition that began in 1983," HHB CEO Steve Snider said in a release.

METRO HALIFAX

METRO INTERNATIONAL NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR 2009 Festival of Media Awards

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Charged cop allowed to leave city for holidays

COURT A Halifax Regional Police officer charged with extortion will be allowed to leave the city for Christmas.

Const. Jeffrey Buchanan, 29, has been confined to his Dartmouth home on $15,000 bail after he was arrested earlier this month. Court documents claim he tried to extort $5,100 from a convicted drug dealer while on duty.

Buchanan made a brief appearance in Halifax provincial court yesterday to ask for a variance on his bail so he could visit his father's house in Sydney for the holidays. Both the Crown lawyer and judge consented to the variance.

Buchanan will be allowed to go to Sydney from Dec. 21 to Jan. 5.

Buchanan has been suspended from his duties but is eligible to receive pay for at least 60 days.

METRO HALIFAX

Sewage plant sees progress

Generators linked to prevent future shortouts, floods

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A mild odour of chemical cleaner now permeates the Halifax wastewater-treatment facility, wafting up from a cavernous "wet well" that descends deep beneath Upper Water Street.

Eleven months after a massive flood filled the entire well with wastewater and raw sewage, the walls have been scrubbed down, the equipment replaced, and some major modifications made to ensure it doesn't happen again.

Mayor Peter Kelly took a tour of the facility yesterday, and said he is confident it will be running at full capacity by late April or early May.

"It's come a long way since (the flood)," he said. "This event wasn't planned for, but unfortunately, it happened."

What exactly happened on the night of Jan. 14 has been poured over ad nauseam by municipal officials and forensic teams, who concluded that a power outage was ultimately to blame for the catastrophe.

During the outage, two generators were supposed to activate, keeping the plant running. But one of them overloaded and then quickly shut down to protect itself, stopping the facility's five main pumps and allowing wastewater to pour in.

Plant manager Rory MacNeil explained the two generators have now been linked, and will automatically balance their power outputs so neither will short out. Electrical equipment that controlled the pumps was also moved up and out of reach of possible flood waters.

"Even if there is water in the main well ... those pumps will continue to be able to pump water up and out," MacNeil said.

The cleanup came at an estimated cost of $11 million, most of which was covered by insurance. A still-unknown amount will be covered by the municipality, Kelly admitted.

Halifax Water general manager Carl Yates said HRM's two other treatment plants have been modified based on lessons learned from the flood, and he's confident the changes will prevent similar disasters from happening in the future.

"It won't happen again," he said. "Not the way it did before."



RYAN TAPLIN/METRO HALIFAX

Mayor Peter Kelly tours the Halifax wastewater-treatment plant yesterday. The plant should be operating at full capacity again by the end of April or beginning of May.

"It's come a long way since (the flood). This event wasn't planned for, but unfortunately, it happened."
Mayor Peter Kelly

Home sales up 8.6% in province

PROPERTY The Nova Scotia housing market appears to be in recovery mode as fall statistics show sales were up almost 10 per cent from last year's down year.

Housing sales through the MLS system were up 8.6 per cent provincewide between September and November, according to the Nova Scotia Association of Realtors

The Halifax Regional Municipality led the way with 1,191 sales, up 19 per cent over last year. The northern mainland region — which includes parts of Cumberland, Colchester and Pictou counties — had the worst outcome with 326 sales, down nine per cent from last year.

Listings were down 8.2 per cent overall.

The total value of homes sold through MLS was $474.2 million, up almost 15 per cent over last year.

METRO HALIFAX

Male injured in vehicle collision

ROADS A male was transported to hospital with undetermined injuries yesterday morning after slippery roads caused a two-vehicle collision on Smith Road near Amherst.

Amherst and Parrsboro RCMP, Northern Corridor Traffic Services and EHS responded to the call at 7:57 a.m.

RCMP were also dispatched to two separate accidents after both vehicles slid off the Trans Canada Highway in icy conditions. All occupants escaped injuries.

AMHERST DAILY NEWS

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WHAT'S ONLINE TODAY

Video For Canadian troops in Afghanistan, it's the smallest acts of kindness that make the biggest difference at **metronews.ca/canada**

Blogs Backbeat suggests giving the gift of vinyl this year and SpinDoctor wonders how Tories are so good at brand management, yet so awful at public relations



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Committee still recommends minimum-wage hike

PHILIP CROUCHER
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DECISION A provincial review committee is continuing to recommend the government proceed with plans to increase the minimum wage at two different points in 2010.

In 2008, Nova Scotia's minimum wage review committee developed a three-year minimum-wage increase schedule calling for a hike from $8.60 to $9.20 per hour on April 1, followed by a second increase to $9.65 on Oct. 1.

A government release issued yesterday said the committee has reviewed that decision and is recommending to the province that it moves forward with it.

The decision was based on several factors, the release said, including economic conditions, labour trends and the changing value of minimum wage.

The government hasn't made a final decision on whether to accept the recommendations, but must do so within 60 days. Marilyn More, minister of labour and workforce development, is asking for the public's input on the issue through Jan 22.

The committee's report is available online at gov.ns.ca/lwd.

One group campaigning against both minimum-wage increases is the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. It is calling on the province to extend when the increases would take place by at least a year.

"About half our members do support increasing the minimum wage, but they believe it's too quick," said CFIB spokesman Bradley George. "I mean, there will be a 27 per cent increase in two years if we follow the current schedule."

Past increases

- If both minimum wage increases go through, they'll follow a 6.5 per cent hike on May 1, 2008 — to $8.10 per hour — and a 6.2 per cent increase last April 1.

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Cape Breton youth dead after two-vehicle collision

An 18-year-old from Donkin is dead after a two-vehicle collision on the Donkin highway on Monday. The young Cape Breton man was the lone occupant of one of the cars. The lone occupant of the other car — a woman in her 40s — suffered non-life-threatening injuries. CAPE BRETON POST

Public funds make Games trip

$13,320 spent on Olympic tickets to court investment for N.S.

VANCOUVER 2010 Games

PAUL MCLEOD
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Most won't get to see the men's Olympic gold medal hockey final in person next year, but you will be chipping in for some Nova Scotia business leaders to see it.

Nova Scotia Business Inc. executives are heading to Vancouver and have bought tickets for several Olympic events to host businesses and court investment to the province.

The publicly funded agency has spent $13,320 on tickets. This includes six seats at the men's gold medal hockey game ($4,200 total), four tickets for the opening ceremonies ($4,400), six tickets for the closing ceremonies ($4,400) and four tickets to another men's hockey game ($320).

"We're looking at which events most prospective clients would like to attend," said NSBI spokeswoman Sarah Levy.

"For us this is a real business opportunity. This is what we do ... Our job is to be proactive. Most provinces, if not all provinces, will be at the games doing the same thing."



RYAN TAPLIN/METRO HALIFAX

NSBI president and CEO Stephen Lund speaks at a press conference in this file photo from earlier this year. Lund is one of five Nova Scotia Business Inc. staff who will be going to next year's Vancouver Olympics on the taxpayer's dime.

Levy said the Olympics are a unique chance to talk to businesses from around the world.

The $13,320 figure does not include airfare and accommodations, which are yet to be determined. NSBI will also cover accommodations, but not airfare, for clients such as Lockheed Martin, so they can travel to the Games to share their experiences about setting up shop in the province.

"They actually end up being some of our best salespeople," Levy said. "If we can bring a company, someone who is here on the ground, to talk about the benefits of doing business in Nova Scotia their endorsement is the best kind."

The team is targeting businesses from three key sectors — defence and aerospace; IT; and financial services.

The five-member delegation includes NSBI president and CEO Stephen Lund, vice-president of marketing and communications Lisa Bugden, and Mark James, director of defence, security and aerospace.

Premier defends 4-day excursion to Vancouver

Nova Scotia's NDP premier is going to the Vancouver Olympics and will accept a pass to all locations from organizers, even though his party sharply criticized his Conservative predecessor for his plan to receive VIP passes at the Games.

Premier Darrell Dexter said yesterday he's decided to go to the Games for four days to attend a Nova Scotia Day ceremony, and to participate in receptions that will showcase his province.



Dexter

He said he will have an "access pass" for himself and two officials from his office, but he couldn't explain what the pass entitled him to. No other politicians will go, Dexter said, and he won't sit and watch sports events.

"There are not free tickets available ... what there are, are some venue passes that are available but they aren't tickets," he said.

Dexter said he knows he will attend receptions, but he doesn't know the specifics of his schedule.

"I'm not intending to do anything other than to go to support the event ... I think it's really important that people understand we're going to support money that we have already spent."

The province, which is committing $2.8 million to the Games, is projecting a $525-million deficit this year.

Liberal Leader Stephen McNeil said he doesn't object to the premier being in Vancouver to represent the province, but said it's another example of the NDP taking one position in opposition and then reversing course in office. "Now that he's in government he has a different set of rules for himself," he said.

When it looked in February like Tory premier Rodney MacDonald was going to attend the Games, Graham Steele — who was then the NDP's finance critic — said "the premier has got his priorities upside down." Steele, who is now finance minister, also said MacDonald should pick up the tab for the tickets.

THE CANADIAN PRESS



Shown left to right: Patrick O'Regan, Mary Lou Crowley, Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia, Janice Flemming - O'Regan's 10,000th customer of 2009, and Sean O'Regan.

O'Regan's celebrates 10K with $10,000 donation.

The 10K mark has been achieved. O'Regan's just delivered their 10,000th vehicle of the year, a 2010 Chevy Equinox. To celebrate, O'Regan's is pleased to present a $10,000 donation to the Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia. O'Regan's Automotive would like to thank all their customers who helped in achieving this milestone, including Janice Flemming, the lucky owner of the Equinox.
Best wishes this holiday season and a happy 2010.



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Income fund buys Bluewave Energy

PETROLEUM Alberta-based Parkland Income Fund has agreed to buy a Dartmouth company that distributes petroleum products in many parts of Canada for $214 million.

The Red Deer, Alta.-based income fund says its purchase of Bluewave Energy Limited Partnership will make Parkland the largest independent petroleum distributor in Canada.

After the Bluewave purchase, Parkland will have a presence in all provinces except Newfoundland.

Bluewave is the largest branded distributor of Shell fuels in Canada. It delivers furnace oil, diesel fuel, gasoline and related products to homes and businesses and operates in seven provinces.

Parkland currently runs retail and wholesale fuels and convenience store businesses at about 612 locations across Canada under the names Fas Gas Plus, Fas Gas, Race Trac Fuels and Short Stop Food Stores.

Parkland also operates the Bowden refinery near Red Deer, Alta., as a storage and contract-processing site.

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New record set for Operation Red Nose

Operation Red Nose 2009 has set a new record for both rides completed and total donations. The volunteer holiday ride service wrapped up last weekend with final numbers showing 518 vehicles transporting 1,295 passengers with $8,870.81 being raised for Safe Grad programs in HRM. METRO HALIFAX

Pre-trial set for parents in baby death case

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A pre-trial date has been set in the case of a young Halifax couple accused of seriously injuring their infant daughter.

Ashiqur Rahman and Jane Gomes will return to Halifax Provincial Court Jan. 20 to set a firm date for what will likely be a five-day trial, a judge ruled yesterday. For now, a tentative trial date has been set for April 19.



Ashiqur Rahman

The couple, originally from Bangladesh and staying in Canada on student visas, are charged with aggravated assault in connection with the death of their seven-week-old daughter, Aurora Breakthough. The child was admitted to the IWK Health Sciences Centre with serious injuries on July 23 after her parents called 911 from their apartment on Gottingen Street. She died four days later, but an official cause of death has not been released.

Crown prosecutor Denise Smith reiterated yesterday the charges against the couple could change once a medical examiner's report has been filed in the case. That report is expected early in the new year, Smith told the judge.

If the charges are upgraded, the couple will most likely be tried separately.

Gomes and Rahman are forbidden from having any contact with one another, and were brought to the courthouse in separate vehicles. They sat on the defendant's bench flanked by five sheriffs, and appeared relaxed as they listened to the exchanges between their lawyers and the judge.

Both have been in custody since July 25, and have once again been remanded to the Burnside jail to await their next court appearance. On that date, Gomes is scheduled to again have a bail hearing. It was held over for a second time yesterday.



RYAN TAPLIN/METRO HALIFAX

Jane Gomes leaves a courtroom at Halifax provincial court in this photo from earlier this month. Gomes and her partner, Ashiqur Rahman, are charged with aggravated assault in the death of their infant daughter.

Cops investigating three robberies

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Halifax Regional Police are on the lookout for several suspects after a rash of robberies took place late Monday, including one where a worker in a hospital parking booth was threatened by someone who claimed to have a knife.

Police say the knife incident took place at 10:15 p.m. in the parking booth at the Victoria General at 1278 South Park St. in Halifax. Police say a white man knocked on the door, forced his way inside, threatened he had a knife and demanded the cash till be open. Police say the suspect then took all the bills and fled the scene with an undisclosed amount of money. The suspect is described as six-foot, between 190 and 200 pounds, with dark clothing and white sneakers.

About 90 minutes later, police say another robbery took place as a man walking on Evans Avenue in Fairview was approached and assaulted by three suspects. He had his cellphone stolen.

The other alleged robbery took place at 5:45 p.m. as a man was walking down Dublin Street in Halifax. Police say the victim was approached by two black males who demanded his iPod and threatened to harm him if he called anyone. The victim wasn't injured and police say the suspects left the area.

News in brief

ACCIDENT Marine Atlantic is consulting with Transport Canada and other authorities after the ferry MV Atlantic Vision struck a dock yesterday. In a news release, Marine Atlantic indicated as the vessel made its final approach to the dock, winds suddenly increased to 42 knots, and the vessel struck the fendering system on the dock. The impact resulted in a puncture to the stern about 15 feet above the water line. Repairs will take place as soon as possible. CAPE BRETON POST

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Halifax farmers' market gets agriculture funding

Agriculture Minister John MacDonell announced yesterday $430,984 in funding to help local food direct marketers. Included among the four markets receiving funds is the Farmers' Market of Nova Scotia Co-operative in Halifax. The other markets are located in Berwick, Tatamagouche and Wolfville. METRO HALIFAX

Top cop says drug court could work in Cape Breton

The Cape Breton Regional Municipality could make a strong argument for becoming home to a pilot drug court in Nova Scotia, police Chief Myles Burke says.

Burke raised the issue with the Cape Breton Post about trends in drug abuse in the region.

"I think if you look at the numbers, you look at the volume of charges going through the courts, the drug-related crime, drug-related activity, it all comes down to available resources and it would be great to see the courts have other options for treatment and programs available," he said.

Burke said people seem to like hearing about enforcement efforts and seeing police execute search warrants as they tackle drug activity, which he noted is an important part of the fight. But he added there needs to be a balanced approach and prevention, education and treatment need to be considered.

In August, the province set up a special court in Dartmouth to divert some of the province's mentally ill people away from the criminal justice system and into treatment programs. The person being tried must either admit to the crime before appearing in the mental health court or have been found guilty in a regular court and then referred.

Burke said a drug court could operate in much the same way. Drug courts have been established in other parts of the country.

CAPE BRETON POST

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While Quantities Last. No Rainchecks



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HARAJUKU LOVERS
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Selected Types Contains: Eau de Toilette (30mL) and Solid Perfume Compact (1.2g)



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OH WHAT FUN



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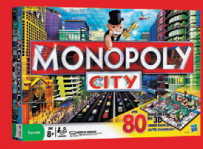
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LIFE BRAND
HAZELNUT BALLS (200g), BELGIAN FINGERS (300g) or SEASHELLS (250g)



5.99 each

TOBLERONE BAR 400g Selected Types



9.99 each

LIFE BRAND Gourmet Jelly Beans 900g



4.99 each

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Prices are in effect Wednesday December 23 & Thursday, December 24, 2009 only. While quantities last. No Rainchecks. *Our Regular Price.

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††Where permitted.

SHOPPERS DRUG MART

Man convicted in RCMP officer's death planning appeal

The man found guilty of first-degree murder in the shooting death of a Hay River, N.W.T., RCMP officer has launched an appeal. Jurors last month in Yellowknife convicted Emrah Bulatci, 25, in the killing of Const. Christopher Worden in October 2007. Bulatci received the mandatory sentence of life in prison with no chance of parole for at least 25 years. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Canada



Missing teen might be in Lafleur video

Quebec police have released a clip of a recent television interview with hockey great Guy Lafleur, in the hopes of cracking a missing teen case. In the 11-second clip, a teenager bearing a strong resemblance to missing Quebecer David Fortin appears in the background. The Lafleur interview was recorded at Montreal's Bell Centre in early December. Fortin, 15, disappeared last February after leaving his Alma, Que., home for school.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Court rules for new libel defence

The Supreme Court of Canada offered journalists and bloggers a new defence against libel yesterday in a pair of rulings that were hailed as a landmark victory for free speech.

The rulings effectively exonerated the Toronto Star and Ottawa Citizen newspapers and created the new "responsible journalism" defence that will give reporters more leeway to pursue controversial stories as long as they are deemed to be in the public interest.

Media lawyers hailed the creation of the new defence as a major step towards reducing so-called libel chill, which prompts journalists to back away from contentious stories for fear of being sued, often by powerful interests with deep pockets to pay their lawyers.

The rulings also saved the two newspapers from paying out more than $1.5 million in damages, including $1 million for punitive damages against the Star, one of the largest such awards in Canadian libel history.

The Star story in question was about controversial plans for a golf course, while the Citizen's articles scrutinized the activities of a former police officer.

Chief Justice Beverly McLachlin, writing for the unanimous 9-0 court, said the existing libel defences were too restrictive.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Factual errors

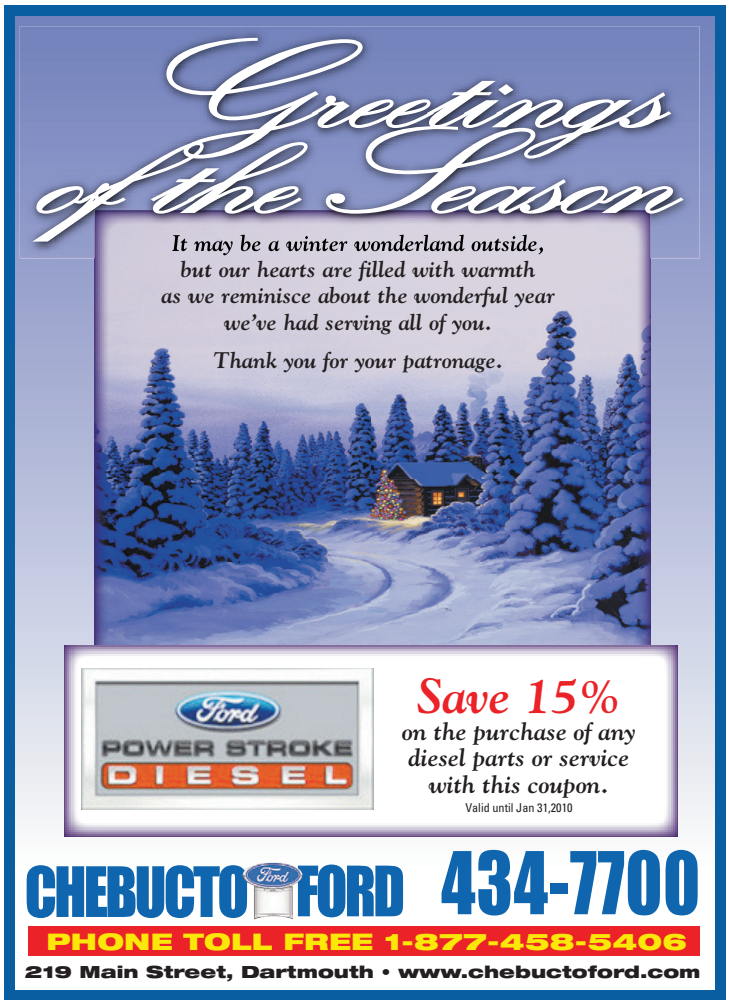
- The rulings mean journalists can make factual errors, but as long as they take a series of steps to ensure fairness in stories that are deemed to be in the public interest, they cannot be successfully sued for libel.

Kandahar **Early Christmas for troops**



COLIN PERKEL/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Master Warrant Officer Charlotte Hawes serves Christmas dinner at the Canadian military-civilian outreach base in Kandahar, Afghanistan, yesterday. Soldiers, many sporting Santa hats or reindeer horns, enjoy some holiday fun and food.



Boycott does not stop detainee meeting

AFGHANISTAN A House of Commons committee looking into the Afghan detainee controversy is going ahead with a meeting today despite a boycott by Conservative MPs.

Liberal, NDP and Bloc Québécois MPs on the special committee on Afghanistan decided to hold an informal meeting after they failed to achieve quorum.

They are hearing from retired diplomat Gar Pardy and Paul Champ, lawyer for the B.C. Civil Liberties Association.

Pardy recently organized a letter from more than 100 former ambassadors criticizing the Harper government for attacking the credibility of diplomat Richard Colvin, who says he warned the government in 2006 about torture.

The committee is looking into whether the government knew prior to 2007 that detainees being handed over by Canadian troops to Afghan authorities were being abused.

The government insists it never knew of any abuse before 2007, when it changed the prisoner transfer agreement to allow for monitoring.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Opposition

- New Democrat MP Paul Dewar said the Tories would rather "slurp eggnog and eat bon bons" than get to the bottom of this issue.

Feds consider drugs in junk food

CANCER Ottawa wants to know what you think about its unusual proposal to put a cancer-fighting drug into junk food.

Health Canada is inviting public comments until February 21 on its idea to have small amounts of the enzyme asparaginase put into foods like potato chips and french fries.

On its website, Health Canada says its scientists have finished a detailed safety assessment on the enzyme and haven't found any health or safety concerns. At issue is the chemical acrylamide, which is found as a cooking byproduct in the production of foods like french fries and potato chips and has been linked to cancer in animals. Research suggests asparaginase reduces acrylamide production.

Health Canada notes the enzyme is used in the U.S., Australia, New Zealand, and Denmark. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Embassy lacking in beer options

WASHINGTON Canada has a reputation for producing a wide variety of excellent beers, but tipplers visiting the Canadian Embassy had just three choices of brews recently — Molson Canadian, Alexander Keith's Ale or Blue Light.

According to documents obtained through Freedom of Information legislation, the gleaming embassy on iconic Pennsylvania Avenue offers up a long list of Canadian wines to visitors, among them pinot noirs, merlots, Gewurztraminers and rieslings from an array of vineyards across the country.

Pity the poor Canadian beer drinker, however — as of Oct. 31 of this year, only those three basic brews were available.

As craft breweries and brew pubs take off in Canada, one Canadian beer expert says it's a shame the embassy isn't doing a better job introducing Americans to some quality suds brewed north of the 49th parallel. THE CANADIAN PRESS

m.metronews.ca

Though the heady days of '00' years are gone, the lens-unfriendly '1' hasn't hurt the New Year's novelty specs market. Scan this barcode for the story.

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(Value $125)
Fragrance shown: **$85**

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CALVIN KLEIN
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ESTÉE LAUDER
Get this great gift with any Estée Lauder fragrance purchase of $60 or more (before taxes).
For your purchase may we suggest:
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Beautiful, **$37.50 to $99**.

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With any $50 **COSMETICS** or **FRAGRANCE** purchase (before taxes).

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Quebec backpedals on power deal

Charest says agreement to buy NB Power still up for negotiation

The Quebec government was suddenly singing a more conciliatory tune over its planned purchase of New Brunswick's power utility, suggesting yesterday the deal was still open for negotiation.

Just one day after Quebec's natural resources minister suggested the purchase of NB Power was a done deal and would not be changed, both she and Premier Jean Charest were saying the exact opposite.

"There are discussions," Charest told TVA network.

"There could be improvements. It could happen."

For her part, Natural Resources Minister Nathalie Normandeau had a strikingly different message from the one she delivered 24 hours earlier.

She now says an agreement-in-principle was signed on Oct. 29, and that negotiations are continuing as New Brunswick Premier Shawn Graham brings forward the concerns of critics who aren't yet sold on the deal.

"It's in this spirit of openness that our discussions continue with New Brunswick," Normandeau said in an interview.

"There's an important nuance to make between renegotiating an agreement-in-principle and making adjustments."

The sale is a hot potato for the New Brunswick government, which has come under intense political fire over its plan to sell NB Power's assets to Hydro-Quebec for about $4.8 billion.

"There could be improvements. It could happen."
Jean Charest, Quebec premier

Critics have slammed the government for selling off key assets. Neighbouring provinces and states have also expressed concern, arguing that it will create a quasi-monopoly for Hydro Quebec in the Atlantic region.

The Opposition Conservatives in New Brunswick have also complained that the details are not being properly shared with the public.

The government has defended the sale by saying the money will help the province make investments in areas, like education, that will lead to a more prosperous future for New Brunswick.

It has also sought to fend off much of the criticism by saying final details are still being worked out.

Normandeau's suggestion Monday that negotiations were finished raised some eyebrows in New Brunswick. A spokesman for Graham said she clearly made a mistake and, as a result, the New Brunswick government would not comment.

Normandeau said the ultimate goal it to reach a mutually beneficial deal that's a "win-win" for everybody.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

PM does not rule out carbon tax

POLITICS Prime Minister Stephen Harper is not ruling out a carbon tax for Canada sometime in the future.

Harper was asked point blank in a year-end interview with CTV News whether Canadians will ever see such a tax. He responded simply that he hopes not to go down that road. He said the government will have to see what the U.S. decides to do so it can be part of a harmonized North American climate-change plan.

Harper and his Conservatives hammered former Liberal Leader Stéphane Dion for making a carbon tax the centrepiece of his environmental plan during the last election.

Such tax proposals are generally applied to fossil fuel consumption to help encourage industry and the public to change their behaviour.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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HEAD CURTAIN SIDE IMPACT AIRBAGS	Standard	Not Available	Standard
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16" ALUMINUM WHEELS	Standard	15" Steel	15" Steel
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Dog recovering from H1N1 flu

Experts say a dog in suburban New York City is the United States' first confirmed to be carrying the same strain of H1N1 flu that is infecting humans. The 13-year-old mixed-breed male is recovering. Animals can carry flu viruses, but Dr. Anne Schuchat of the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says "this is not a reason to be concerned." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

World



Big Christmas haul in Spain

Spain's Christmas lottery showered hundreds of thousand of euros in prize money on Madrid yesterday. The top prize of the lottery, ranked among the world's richest, went to holders of tickets bearing the number 78294, displayed by two lottery workers, left. The number appears on 1,950 tickets, and each holder stood to win about $430,000. Two immigrant workers from the Dominican Republic were among the winners. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Teen pleads no contest in Facebook sex scam

A Wisconsin teenager who blackmailed dozens of fellow high school students into sex acts by using photos and videos obtained in a Facebook scam faces up to 50 years in prison after pleading no contest to two felonies yesterday.

Anthony R. Stancl, 19, had faced 12 charges that carried a maximum penalty of nearly 300 years. He pleaded no contest to repeated sexual assault of the same child and third-degree sexual assault. In exchange, prosecutors dismissed charges that included second-degree sexual assault, child enticement and possession of child pornography.

Blackmailed into sex

• The investigation began after a 16-year-old boy told authorities he was being blackmailed into acts of oral and anal sex with Stancl. The boy, then 15, had exchanged explicit pictures of himself online with "Kayla," who later threatened to spread his picture throughout the school unless he agreed to the acts with Stancl. Stancl photographed those encounters, giving him fodder for further blackmail, detectives said.

Stancl was accused of posing as a girl online and persuading more than 30 classmates to send him naked pictures of themselves, then using the images to blackmail them for sex.

Authorities found more than 30 folders on Stancl's computer containing about 300 nude images of other male students at New Berlin Eisenhower High School.

Waukesha County district attorney Brad Schimel said he would recommend a "substantial" prison sentence and that he was satisfied with the plea agreement because Stancl still faces up to 50 years.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Italy **What is this, Toronto?**



ANTONIO CALANNI/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Italian soldiers hold shovels as they walk past the Duomo cathedral in Milan yesterday. Italy has sent hundreds of soldiers to the streets of Milan after heavy snowstorms and freezing temperatures forced airports to be closed and trains to be halted. About 600 soldiers have begun to shovel snow.

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Court orders amputations

PAKISTAN A Pakistani court has ordered the noses and ears of two men cut off after they did the same thing to a young woman whose family spurned one of the men's marriage proposal, a prosecutor said yesterday.

The anti-terrorism court in the eastern city of Lahore said it was applying Islamic law by ordering the punishment.

Lahore prosecutor Chaudhry Ali Ahmed said one of the accused, Sher Mohammad, was a cousin of the 19-year-old woman and wanted to marry her. Her parents refused his proposal.

Sher Mohammad and a friend, Amanat Mohammad, were accused of kidnapping the woman and cutting off her ears and nose in September.

The court on Monday also sentenced each man to 50 years in prison and told them to pay fines and compensation to the woman amounting to several thousand dollars, the prosecutor said.

Pakistan's legal system has Islamic elements that sometimes lead to orders for harsh punishments, but the sentences are often overturned and rarely carried out. Serious crimes are often referred to anti-terrorism courts in Pakistan because they move faster.

Violence against women, especially attacks by spurned lovers, also occurs frequently in Pakistan.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sweet! metro's koolest
The Best Halifax has to Offer
Congratulations to **Jim Gauthier** – this month's winner of a Metro's Koolest Voter prize! Jim can pick up his prize pack at the Kool FM offices at 3770 Kempt Road!
metro Do it daily.
We Play Anything. KOOL 96.5 FM

News in brief

BRITAIN An English priest is giving some unconventional holiday advice — shoplifting may be OK. Rev. Tim Jones was rebuked by fellow clergy and shop owners yesterday after delivering a Sunday sermon in which he said it was sometimes acceptable for desperate people to shoplift from large chain stores. From his pulpit at the Church of St. Lawrence in York, Jones told his congregation that shoplifting can be justified if a person in real need is not greedy. The remarks sparked a firestorm of protest.

KANSAS A judge says the law doesn't allow a so-called "necessity defence" in the trial of a man charged with killing one of the United States' few late-term abortion providers. The ruling was another blow to lawyers for Scott Roeder, who has confessed to shooting Dr. George Tiller in May.

ARIZONA Officials say a dust storm has led to 20 or more collisions on Interstate 10 in central Arizona, with several vehicles catching fire. Authorities say at least one person has died. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

m.metronews.ca
ScanLife
With an available couch or great restaurant tips a tweet away, social networking has changed the way we travel. Scan this barcode for the full story.

Former mountain biker pleads guilty

Former U.S. mountain bike world champion Melissa Giove has pleaded guilty to helping run a coast-to-coast marijuana smuggling ring. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

London **Prince samples life as a pauper**



CENTREPOINT/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

In this image from the homeless charity Centrepoint yesterday, Britain's Prince William and Centrepoint CEO Seyi Obakin prepare for a night sleeping outside in freezing temperatures in central London. The Prince bedded down in a sleeping bag to experience being homeless.

Details could scuttle prisoner swap

Israel delivered its counter-demands yesterday for a deal with Hamas to exchange about 1,000 Palestinian prisoners for a single Israeli soldier held captive by Gaza militants for more than three years.

As families on both sides agonized over the outcome, last-minute differences over who should be freed or sent into exile threatened to imperil the deal.

Israel insists on expelling some West Bank-born prisoners to the Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip or abroad and balks at releasing some inmates high on the Hamas wish list, said a senior Hamas official who spoke on condition of anonymity because he is not supposed to brief reporters.

Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak appeared to be trying to temper expectations when he told a group of students that returning Sgt. Gilad Schalit was a "top priority" — but "not at any price," a reference to Palestinian prisoners convicted of bloody attacks.

The Hamas official said that while progress has been made, a deal is not imminent.

A Hamas website, al-Risalah, said a German mediator would meet later with Hamas leaders in Gaza who will "take a final and conclusive decision on what the German mediator brings from his visit to the occupied territories."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Marathon discussions

- In recent days, marathon discussions about the swap at the top level of Israel's government conveyed a sense of urgency. However, more than three years of negotiations following the capture of the Israeli soldier have been shrouded in a fog of disinformation and spin, leading to repeated false alarms that a deal is close. The decision on whether to accept what would be the biggest swap in years is crucial for Hamas, which wrested Gaza from Western-backed Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in 2007.

Woman arrested for Obama threat

HAWAII A woman accused of telling the U.S. Secret Service she would "blow away" Michelle Obama was in federal custody yesterday as the Obama family planned to travel to Hawaii.

Kristy Lee Roshia, 35, was charged with threatening a family member of the president and assaulting a federal agent after being arrested Saturday less than two miles from where the Obama family planned to stay during a holiday visit later this week.

Roshia called the Secret Service's Boston office last month and told a receptionist, "I will kill Michelle Obama," according to a Secret Service affidavit.

Roshia has a history of leaving rambling messages and sending poems, love letters and photographs of herself to the Secret Service, according to the affidavit. She was being held without bail pending detention hearing.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Parliamentarian wants veil ban

FRANCE A French parliamentarian said yesterday he would file legislation to bar Muslim women from wearing veils that hide their faces in public. Jean-Francois Cope suggested that he would submit his bill before the panel issues its report. He said he wants the veil banned not just from public buildings but also in the streets of France. "We want a ban in public areas," Cope said. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Russia posts record arms sales for post-Soviet era

The head of a Russian government agency in charge of arms trade has been quoted by news wires saying Russia will set a post-Soviet record in arms sales this year. While China has reduced purchases of Russian weapons, other nations, such as Venezuela and Algeria, have become major customers. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Chunnel train service resumes

STRANDED Eurostar scrambled to get tens of thousands of passengers home for the holidays as it resumed service of high-speed trains under the English Channel yesterday, four days after a service shutdown caused by snow.

The first train pulled out of Paris's Gare du Nord in the morning, carrying 750 passengers, many of whom had been stranded since the rail link between Britain, France and Belgium was suspended Saturday.

Cold culprit

- The breakdown of train service in the Channel Tunnel Saturday was caused by unusually dry, powdery snow that got into the train engines.

Hundreds of others waited in a line stretching across the cavernous Paris train station, as Eurostar staff circulated with trays of pastries and coffee.

The shutdown affected 40,000 people and left French President Nicolas Sarkozy indignant. Eurostar offered its "deepest apologies," promised compensation and pledged to do its utmost to make sure passengers can celebrate the holidays with families.

People who were supposed to travel over the weekend were given priority as about two out of three regularly scheduled trains began running.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS





MONIKA SCISLOWSKA/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Polish investigators surround one of the suspects in last week's theft of the sign from the entrance to Auschwitz. Three suspects were brought to the site yesterday to re-enact the robbery.

Foreign link cited in Auschwitz theft

Police say crime directed from outside Poland

A foreigner outside of Poland commissioned the brazen theft of the infamous Auschwitz sign, officials said, and detectives must expand their investigation beyond the country's borders.

In an effort to learn more about the escapade, the investigators held an re-enactment of the theft by the three men who confessed to taking the sign from the former Nazi death camp at Auschwitz.

The sign, which hung over the entrance to the camp, reads "Arbeit macht frei," which means "Work sets you free" in German.

Based on the evidence gathered since the theft Friday, it appears the crime was commissioned by a "person living outside Poland," and police are seeking help from Interpol and others as they investigate, said Artur Wrona, Krakow's chief prosecutor.

Polish media have reported, without citing any sources, that someone in Sweden could be under suspicion, but Wrona refused to confirm or deny the claims.

In Stockholm, a Swedish police official said the force had not been contacted about any links.

Despite the spectre of an international link to the crime, Wrona said the investigation had so far exposed "glaring negligence" in the security system at the Auschwitz museum, which let the burglars act "undisturbed."

He said they drove to the then-closed museum in a sports car after dark Thursday but found they needed tools to get the sign down. They went to a shop and bought tools, including a spanner, he said.

When the burglars returned, it was just after midnight and there were no guards about as they unbolted one side of the sign and ripped the other off the opposite gate post, officials said.

Police said the sign was cut into three pieces with a saw so it could fit in the getaway car.

Only one camera overlooks the gate and it remained unclear whether it recorded the theft.

Museum spokesman Jaroslaw Mensfelt said that for more than 60 years, the museum's security system had seemed sufficient, but it was now under review.

Working from tips, police found the damaged pieces of the sign Sunday — hidden under snow in the woods — and arrested five suspects in northern Poland. Prosecutors said three of the five men have confessed to the crime. All five face up to 10 years in prison if convicted.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Team narrows search for flight recorders from Air France jet

CRASH French aviation investigators said yesterday they are optimistic about finding the black boxes of Air France Flight 447 when a third phase of the search begins in February.

The plane crashed in the Atlantic last June en route from Rio to Paris, killing all 228 people aboard.

Jean-Paul Troadec, chief of the French Accident Investigation Agency, said an international team of experts will reduce the search area for the black boxes to 2,500 square kilometres, a fifth the range of previous searches.

That should make it easier to locate the debris from the plane, including the black box flight recorders.

"The scientists I have spoken to think that we have a good chance of finding the remains," he said at a news conference outside Paris.

Lead investigator Alain Bouillard said he expects to be able to read the data stored in the black boxes, despite the amount of time they have likely rested on the ocean floor.

The plane's black boxes are believed to lie nearly 7,000 metres underwater. The second search for them ended in August. So far, investigators have located around 1,500 pieces of plane debris, Bouillard said. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Teenaged Dutch sailor returns home

CARIBBEAN JAUNT A Dutch teenager who disappeared from home and was later found on the Caribbean island of St. Maarten is back in the Netherlands. Laura Dekker, 14, was banned earlier this year by a court from attempting to become the youngest person to sail solo around the world. She was interviewed by police after her return and turned over to child-care authorities. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

News in brief

SOLSTICE About 700 people, including pagans and druids, celebrated the winter solstice at Stonehenge, in England. Yesterday was the year's shortest day. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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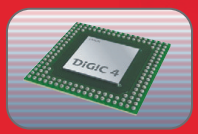
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Comment

Jim and the magic ministry

Flaherty stuck with maintaining financial recovery illusion

TheWestView



You've got to feel sorry for Jim Flaherty, who's in charge of the Ministry of Magic these days.

Oops, sorry. That's the Finance Ministry. Although Flaherty probably wonders if Harry Potter would be better suited to the job.

Take the "recovery," for instance.

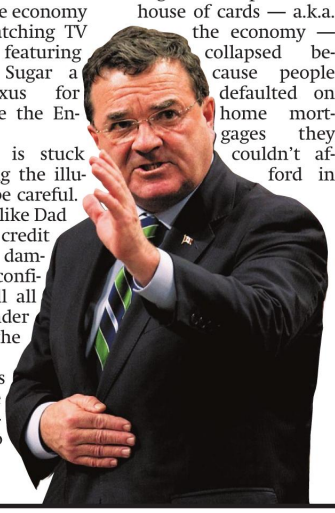
If that's not magic, I don't know what is. Nothing has really happened since 2008, when we woke up with the mother of all hangovers, induced by a decade-long orgy of spending money we haven't got.

All at once, half the value we assumed was in our homes and businesses simply disappeared. We scurried under our beds and refused to come out. Until now — even though nothing has changed. Nonetheless, magicians, er, economists now declare the recession over, thanks to Joe Consumer, back spending money he hasn't got.

I'm not making this up. Less than a year after the world's leaders pumped all their spare cash into the banks to keep the economy afloat, we're watching TV commercials featuring Daddy buying Sugar a brand-new Lexus for Christmas, while the Envys look on.

And Flaherty is stuck with maintaining the illusion. He has to be careful. If he's too much like Dad ranting about credit card bills, he'll damage "consumer confidence" and we'll all crawl back under the bed, ending the "recovery."

The trance is not entire. The consumer confidence index is up 3.7 in December — we're confident in our short-term finances and employment status, but we're still cautious about the future. Still, we're 26.2 per cent more confident (deluded?) than we were at this time last year.

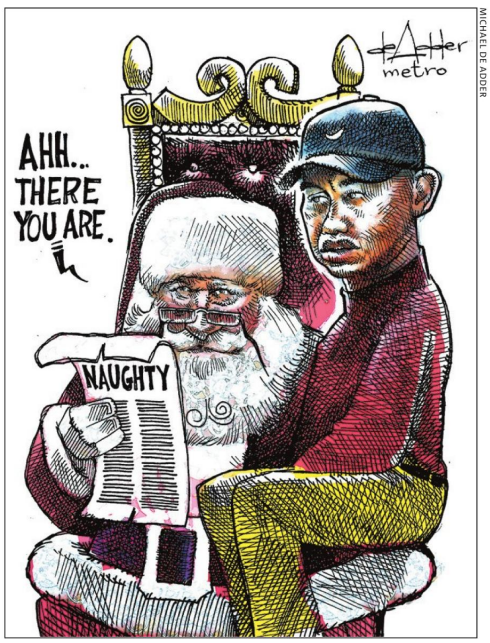

Jim Flaherty

Ever the responsible magician, Flaherty is trying to manage the spell. The house of cards — a.k.a. the economy — collapsed because people defaulted on home mortgages they couldn't afford in the first place. So if interest rates go up — and up they must go if we don't want runaway inflation (bad magic) — people who depend on cheap money will go down and the "recovery" will be over. Flaherty says he will make it tougher to walk into a mortgage: Requiring an actual cash down payment or limiting the term of the mortgage. What? No more 30-year mortgages at two per cent?

Predictably, some magicians worry Flaherty will put a damper on the economy, which, it appears, is fuelled 100 per cent by pixie dust. So, as you sit by the warmth of the fire this holiday season, bolstering your confidence with a bowl of punch, you might spare a moment of sympathy for Tiny Jim.

And it's a good time to count our blessings while we still can — we're OK — at least until the visit of Christmas Yet to Come.

Paul Sullivan is a Vancouver-based journalist and owner of Sullivan Media Consulting; vancouverletters@metronews.ca.



MICHAEL DE ADDER

Word on the street: What's your favourite holiday tradition?

Donna Dill
Dartmouth

A: Getting together with family. It's our children and grandchildren, but also our siblings and parents. That's what makes it special.

Pete Lindsay
Halifax

A: It's pretty casual. I like sitting around chatting on Christmas Eve. There's no gifts involved, just drinks and snacks. It's with family and friends usually. There's usually a small get-together, we just relax and have some laughs.

Victoria Pianarosa
Bedford

A: Making agnolotti with my in-laws. It's a fun thing that everyone in the family participates in. We cut it up and make the filling — then we eat them all. It usually takes a whole afternoon.

David Sadai
Toronto

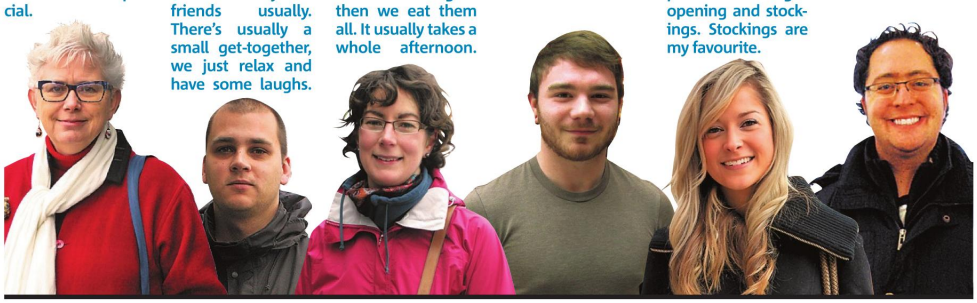
A: My girlfriend's parents still put "from Santa Claus" on the gifts ... and they're already under the tree.

Ashley Young
Edmonton

A: My favourite tradition would be Christmas baking before Christmas and then on Christmas Day, the whole process of gift opening and stockings. Stockings are my favourite.

Paul Greenman
Gatineau, Que.

A: Eating. Pretty much anything — turkey, potatoes, gravy, steak, sausage, my aunt's bean dip, cookies.



Online chatter

Follow Metro on Twitter for news updates and more: @metrohalifax

Asked on Twitter: What's your favourite holiday tradition?

HALIFAX

@raine_angel my family has a special advent tree decorated with special ornaments and a chain link. Every day we remove one link!

TORONTO

@bodsworth Unwrapping new pajamas every Christmas Eve, so come Christmas morning we look fresh and clean for gift giving pics!

CALGARY

@jess4002 we love listening and singing along to christmas music all throughout december! even the terrible christmas songs.

EDMONTON

@lukesheds being passive aggressive toward relatives?

@M4TTW4RD ski-doing and skating with my entire family at long island lake on boxing day. :D

VANCOUVER

@kirksettle definitely the enormous family get-togethers that are almost unreasonably big, like three turkeys for 40 people every x-mas.

@chatkiller hmm ... It would have to be putting up the Christmas tree with my folks, along with putting up lights and ornaments.

@gayvancouver Our fave holiday tradition is our annual Santa photo. Two grown men on Santa's knee certainly livens things up in the mall!

We Know What You're Thinking

88% The number of Canadians who have a plan on how to get home safely when going out to an activity where they might be drinking alcohol.

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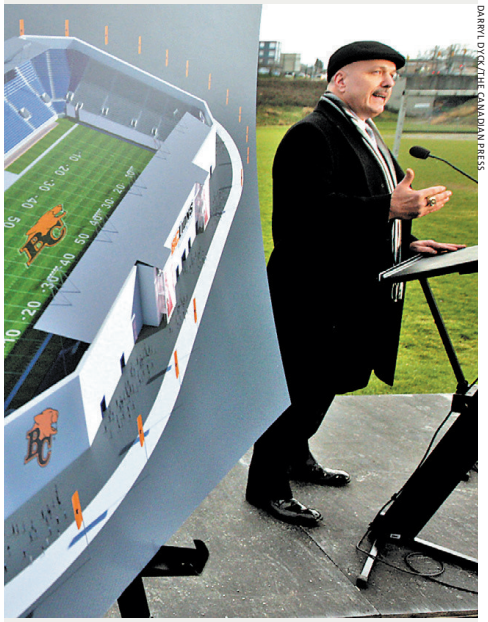
Bank of Nova Scotia sets up in Dubai
The Bank of Nova Scotia said yesterday it has been approved to set up independent operations in Dubai's financial district, making it the first Canadian bank to do so. METRO NEWS SERVICES

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B.C. Temporary home



DARRYL DYCK/THE CANADIAN PRESS

B.C. Lions' vice-president of business George Chayka, speaks during a news conference, as a photograph of a temporary stadium where the CFL team will play during the 2010 season is displayed in Vancouver yesterday.

Word judgment upheld

Jury found Microsoft application infringed on patent

A U.S. federal appeals court has upheld a $290-million US judgement against Microsoft Corp. in a patent case launched by Canada-based i4i Inc.

The ruling also includes an injunction, set to go into effect Jan. 11, that would prevent the sale of at least some versions of Microsoft's popular Word word processing software.

The decision was on an appeal Microsoft launched against a verdict returned by a Texas jury in favour of i4i.

The jury found recent versions of Microsoft Word infringed on a software patent.

Michel Vulpe, founder and co-inventor of i4i, said in a statement that the company is pleased with the decision, calling it "an important step in protecting the property rights of small inventors."

i4i chairman Loudon Owen called the decision a "vindication for i4i and a war cry for talented inventors whose patents are infringed."

"The same guts and integrity that are needed to invent and go against the herd, are at the heart of success in patent litigation against a behemoth like Microsoft," Owen said in a statement.

Kevin Kutz, Microsoft's director of public affairs, said the world's biggest software company is "moving quickly to comply with the injunction."

Kutz said the injunction "applies only to copies of Microsoft Word 2007 and Microsoft Office 2007 sold in the U.S. on or after the injunction date of Jan. 11, 2010."

"Copies of these products sold before this date are not affected," he added.

"With respect to Microsoft Word 2007 and Microsoft Office 2007, we have been preparing for this possibility since the District Court issued its injunction in August 2009 and have put the wheels in motion to remove this little-used feature from these products," Kutz said of the software.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Lawsuit

- i4i sued Microsoft over the way Word 2003 and Word 2007 customize XML, or extensible markup language, used in encoding and displaying information.
- The injunction prevents Microsoft from selling Word products that have the capability of opening an XML file containing custom XML.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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SCANLIFE

A sales boom has shot China past the U.S. as the world's largest auto market, with plenty of potential customers still car-less. Scan this barcode for the full story.

NYSE Taking a walk on the Dark Side



HENNY RAY ABRAMS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Star Wars icon Darth Vader is escorted by storm troopers while touring the floor of the New York Stock Exchange yesterday in New York. To celebrate the lasting appeal of the Star Wars saga, Lucasfilm Ltd. executives and the Star Wars characters visited the exchange and rang the opening bell.

EI usage drops in October: StatsCan

EMPLOYMENT Statistics Canada says the number of people receiving regular Employment Insurance benefits in October edged down 0.5 per cent to 809,600.

That was still 61.8 per cent, or 309,300 more than drew benefits in October 2008.

Over the year, the number of people drawing benefits rose in every province and territory.

The largest increases were in Ontario, with 122,200 more recipients, Alberta, up 56,400, British Columbia, up 52,500 and Quebec, up 49,200.

The number of regular EI beneficiaries peaked in June at 829,300 and began to decline. This contrasts with the trend from October 2008 to June 2009, when monthly increases averaged 41,100 people.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

U.S. housing sales witness huge jump

SALES U.S. home resales surged to the highest level in nearly three years, reflecting an extraordinary level of federal support that has pulled the housing market back from the worst downturn since the Great Depression.

The National Association of Realtors says sales rose 7.4 per cent to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 6.54 million in November, from a downwardly revised pace of 6.09 million in October. Sales were 44 per cent above last year's levels, a record jump.

They had been expected to rise to an annual pace of 6.25 million, according to economists surveyed by Thomson Reuters. The median sales price was $172,600, down 4.3 per cent from a year earlier.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Auto industry poised to turn in 2010

ECONOMY The beleaguered auto industry is poised for a slow but steady turnaround in 2010 that will usher in an era of profitability and job growth after years of declines, according to a new industry forecast.

The Conference Board of Canada, a private-sector economic forecaster, said the auto sector isn't necessarily out of trouble but there are encouraging signs that profits will return in 2010 and strengthen each year through to at least 2014. "The Canadian auto industry appears to have turned a corner in the second half of 2009 and is expected to return to profitability in 2010," economist Sabrina Browarski wrote in the report.

"However, production will remain below historical levels," Browarski added. "Manufacturers will have to make concerted and ongoing efforts to streamline product lineups, control costs, and innovate to maintain profitability." THE CANADIAN PRESS

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AIR CONDITIONING	Standard	Optional	Optional
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REMOTE KEYLESS ENTRY	Standard	Not Available	Not Available
POWER DOOR LOCKS	Standard	Standard	Not Available
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‡‡ Value of additional features based on dealer pricing. Vehicle comparison is based on 2010 G5 SE (2AL69/2AL37 1SA), 2010 Elantra L Sedan (D4T) and 2010 Civic DX Sedan (FA1529EX).** Vehicle specification and purchase price according to the information available on the manufacturer's website at time of printing.

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Senators slash ticket prices

The Ottawa Senators are slashing ticket prices between 20 and 30 per cent for a nine-game stretch starting next month. Beginning Jan. 1, the NHL club will offer a 20-per-cent reduction in single-game ticket prices for eight contests and a 30-per-cent cut for another. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Sports



Corbeil nabs academic honour

Halifax Mooseheads goaltender Mathieu Corbeil has been named his team's recipient of QMJHL scholastic player of the month for the second straight month. The 18-year-old goaltender is currently studying at Saint Mary's University. METRO HALIFAX

EDITOR: DON.MCHOULL@METRONEWS.CA

Anthony enjoying life at the top

MATTHEW WUEST
matthew.wuest@metronews.ca

The Saint John Sea Dogs have taken Steven Anthony for quite a ride — and it might just be getting started.

The Halifax native is enjoying life on the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League's best team after the Sea Dogs went on a phenomenal 22-game winning streak and climbed to second in the national ranking at the holiday break.

Anthony, a Vancouver Canucks draft choice, is on pace for the best numbers of his career, logging top-line minutes and getting plenty of ice time on the power play.

"We're in first place and sitting in good position going into the second half," said the six-foot-two, 190-pound centre.

"It's exciting to be a part of a team like this. I'm glad I can contribute and hopefully we can finish strong."

The Sea Dogs have won 31 of 37 games and Anthony has collected 14 goals and 19 assists for 33 points in 35 games, fifth on the team.

Although he's struggled lately with just five assists in his past eight games, the skilled 18-year-old has enjoyed life under new head coach Gerard Gallant.

"It's exciting to be a part of a team like this. I'm glad I can contribute."
Steven Anthony

His confidence waned at times under previous head coach Jacques Beaulieu.

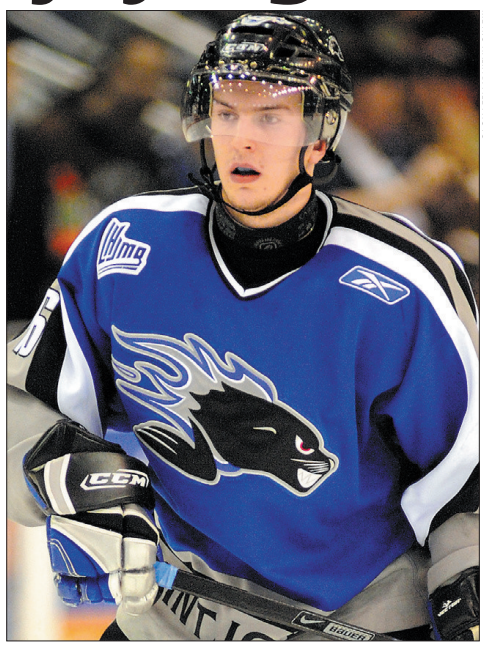
"It's definitely a better fit," said Anthony, a former 10th overall QMJHL pick.

"He's a great coach and the whole staff treats us well. They have confidence in us to go out and play our game, and that's been a part of our success."

The current trade period will determine how much the Sea Dogs will be pushed by other contending teams such as the Drummondville Voltigeurs, Quebec Remparts, Victoriaville Tigres and Moncton Wildcats. But there's no doubt Anthony is in store for a lengthy playoff run.

"We have a really good team," Anthony said.

"We have a good mix at every position … A lot of firepower, a good goaltender and our defence is solid. We're just a good team."



METRO HALIFAX FILE PHOTO

Halifax native Steven Anthony has 33 points in 35 games this year for the first-place Sea Dogs.

Halifax-area talent shining in the Q

LOCAL The following is a glance at Halifax-area hockey products who have stood out in the QMJHL this season.

• **ALEXANDER BEATON**, F, Lower Sackville (Lewiston). Quietly leads struggling Lewiston in scoring with 27 points in 34 games.



Alexander Beaton

• **PETER DELMAS**, G, Bedford (Quebec). Battled through a hip injury to post a 3.06 goals-against average and a .900 save percentage in 23 games for powerful Remparts.

• **BEN DUFFY**, F, Lower Sackville (P.E.I.). Former top pick getting lost in the shuffle at age 17 on a stacked offensive team. He has 22 points in 37 games.

• **GERRAD GRANT**, F, Halifax (Halifax). Despite starting the season on the injured list because of wrist surgery, the 19-year-old is breaking out with 32 points in 33 games.

• **MICHAEL KIRKPATRICK**, F, North Sydney (Saint John). Former Subways winger is third on one of the nation's top teams with 40 points in 37 games.

• **STEPHEN MACAULAY**, F, Dartmouth (Saint John). Six-foot-two forward earned checking job in Saint John and is getting noticed by NHL scouts with 17 points in 35 games.

• **BRANDON MACLEAN**, F, Bedford (P.E.I.). Former first-rounder is a physical winger with seven points in 27 games.

• **CHRISTIAN MORIN**, D, Dartmouth (Saint John). Physical rearguard with nine points and 59 hits in 25 games was dealt last week from Val-d'Or to Saint John.

MATTHEW WUEST/ METRO HALIFAX

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METRO HOCKEY POOL STANDINGS*

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NAME	LOCATION	GP	G	A	PTS
1. Joanne Doiron	NB, CA	415	173	256	429
2. Christian Gagnon	NB, CA	417	175	248	423
3. Kyle Turk	NS, CA	421	194	225	419
4. Cole Warren	NS, CA	422	151	267	418
4. Steve Ferguson	ON, CA	421	174	244	418
6. Jonathon Gremsperger	BC, CA	418	180	233	413
6. Kelly Wrishko	AB, CA	417	171	242	413
6. Paula Almeida-Stille		421	173	240	413
6. Stephen Stille	ON, CA	421	173	240	413
10. Rick Kit	ON, CA	417	179	232	411
11. Shawn Tschritter	AB, CA	417	171	239	410
12. Jean-Paul Osborne	QC, CA	413	169	238	407
13. Brian B	AB, CA	417	173	233	406
13. Claude Brunelle	BC, CA	424	167	239	406
13. Sarah Jackson	ON, CA	409	162	244	406

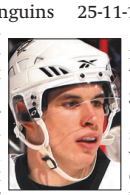
* Results exclude Quebec

markerzone.com metro

No championship hangover for Crosby and the Penguins

NHL The Stanley Cup celebrations were barely two weeks old when Sidney Crosby started thinking about a remedy for the championship hangover.

The Pittsburgh Penguins captain went on vacation with teammate Max Talbot shortly after the Game 7 victory over Detroit and was already looking ahead to this season. Just like that, another long championship pursuit had begun.



Sidney Crosby

"I remember that trip with Sid," Talbot recalled yesterday. "It was a celebration and everything, but (he was saying) 'Let's do it again' — that was his first thought. That's a big reason why we don't have a hangover right now."

Indeed, the Penguins are off to a start that suggests they're as hungry as ever to win the Stanley Cup. With only today's game against Ottawa remaining before the Christmas break, Pittsburgh is hovering around the top of the Eastern Conference with a 25-11-1 record.

There's no doubt in Talbot's mind why things have gone so well.

"This guy, Sid," he said, motioning towards Crosby's locker. "Sid is the main reason.

"He would never let himself or let us have a bad start. I don't think we're satisfied as a group in winning one."

While the team's roster experienced a few changes over the summer, the core remains the same — Crosby, Evgeni Malkin, Jordan Staal, Brooks Orpik and Marc-Andre Fleury are all signed through at least the 2011-12 season. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Hundreds mourn Henry at funeral

FOOTBALL Chris Henry's fiancée wept as she spoke about the late Cincinnati Bengals receiver yesterday, saying that while she often got credit for steering him clear of a trouble, he changed her life as well.

Henry, 26, was killed after he fell out of the bed of pickup truck driven by his fiancée, Loleini Tonga, during what police called a domestic dispute. Police are investigating, but no charges have been filed.

Tonga spoke to hundreds of mourners at his funeral — including Henry's teammates — who filled the grandstands of a suburban New Orleans events centre.

"Can't nobody know the way I'm feeling right now. No one can explain the relationship that me and Chris had. In six years of knowing each other — through hard times, good times — we loved each other very much," she said. "People say I helped change his life. No. He changed mine."



PATRICK SEMANSKY/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NFL commissioner Roger Goodell hugs Cincinnati's Chad Ochocinco yesterday before a memorial service for late Bengals wide receiver Chris Henry in Westwego, La.

NFL commissioner Roger Goodell, Bengals players, coaches and members of the front office, as well as other NFL players were among those in attendance. The Bengals wore black, round buttons on their lapels with Henry's No. 15. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Blue Jays close to trading for Morrow
The Toronto Blue Jays are on the verge of completing their second trade under new general manager Alex Anthopoulos, acquiring pitcher Brandon Morrow from the Seattle Mariners for reliever Brandon League and a prospect. THE CANADIAN PRESS

NBA's Christmas gift could be a real treat

Just in time for Christmas, here comes the matchup that was on the NBA's wish list in June.

The Kobe Bryant-LeBron James showdown didn't pan out last season, but now it arrives in Hollywood with the addition of basketball's biggest supporting actor: Shaquille O'Neal, formerly Bryant's teammate, now James' sidekick.

The Cleveland Cavaliers visit the Los Angeles Lakers Christmas Day, claiming top billing on a five-game schedule. And while the meeting is loaded with subplots, it also comes with a question.

Could this really be an NBA final preview?

"Without a doubt. Definitely," Lakers coach Phil Jackson said. "They're going to be an elite team.

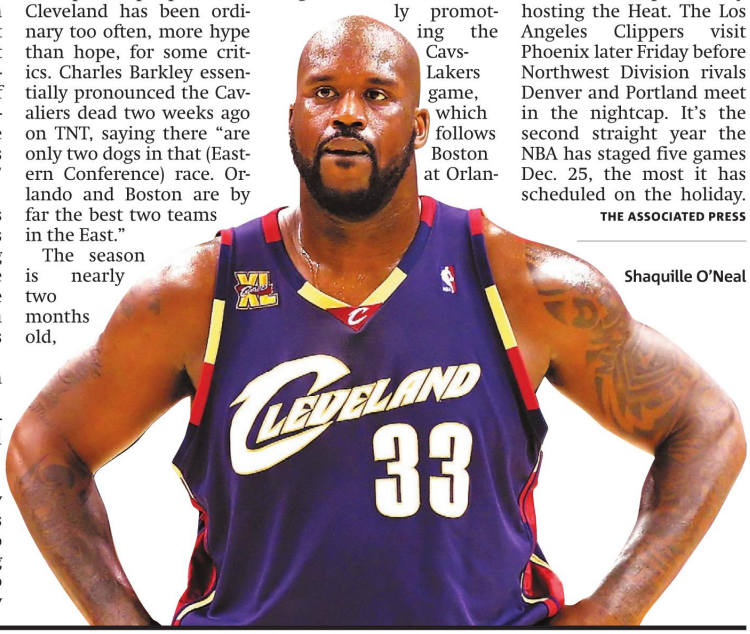
"They got off to a slow start, they had some issues with new personnel to blend in and they're going to start playing well. Too talented a team not to pay attention to."

But while Jackson's team leaves no doubt of its championship potential, Cleveland has been ordinary too often, more hype than hope, for some critics. Charles Barkley essentially pronounced the Cavaliers dead two weeks ago on TNT, saying there "are only two dogs in that (Eastern Conference) race. Orlando and Boston are by far the best two teams in the East."

The season is nearly two months old, but Christmas is traditionally when the NBA makes its first big splash. The league and ESPN are heavily promoting the Cavs-Lakers game, which follows Boston at Orlando on ABC.

New York opens the schedule with its return to Christmas competition by hosting the Heat. The Los Angeles Clippers visit Phoenix later Friday before Northwest Division rivals Denver and Portland meet in the nightcap. It's the second straight year the NBA has staged five games Dec. 25, the most it has scheduled on the holiday.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Shaquille O'Neal

Yankees trade Cabrera to Braves for Vazquez

BASEBALL Pitcher Javier Vazquez was traded back to the Yankees by the Atlanta Braves yesterday for outfielder Melky Cabrera, a move that pushed New York's payroll for next season to more than $200 million US.

New York also got left-hander Boone Logan as part of the deal, and the Braves obtained a pair of pitching prospects, left-hander Mike Dunn and right-hander Arodys Vizcaino, along with about $500,000.

"I didn't want to leave my first time out," Vazquez said. "I'm glad to be back."

The trade leaves New York with an opening in left field, allowing the Yankees to perhaps pursue Mark DeRosa. The club does not appear interested in re-signing Johnny Damon or going after free agents Matt Holliday and Jason Bay of Trail., B.C.

Atlanta had six starting pitchers and felt free to deal Vazquez, who was 14-10 for the Yankees in 2004. He started 10-5 with a 3.56 ERA that year and made his only all-star team, but faded to a 4-5 record and 6.92 ERA after the break, when he was bothered by an aching shoulder.

"The second half of '04, which was poor, cannot erase the long success he's had as a major league pitcher," Yankees general manager Brian Cashman said.

His first stint in New York ended miserably, when he relieved Kevin Brown trailing 2-0 in Game 7 of the AL championship series against Boston and allowed a first-pitch grand slam to Damon, then gave up a two-run homer to Damon in the fourth.

"Hopefully, I can erase those memories," Vazquez said. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

$64M
New York's top four starting pitchers — CC Sabathia, A.J. Burnett, Andy Pettitte and Javier Vazquez — will combine for $64 million in payroll next season. That's more than four teams paid their entire rosters last season.

Sports in brief

ARGOS The Toronto Argonauts signed veteran guard Taylor Robertson to a contract extension yesterday that will see him remain with the CFL club through the 2011 season. The six-foot-six, 317-pound native of Kingston, Ont., joined the Argos in a 2007 trade with Calgary.

RUGBY Veterans Leslie Cripps, Gillian Florence and Heather Jaques will lead the Canadian women's rugby team in a pair of Test matches against the U.S. on Jan. 12 and 16 in Lakeland, Fla. The tour is part of the Canadian women's preparations for the 2010 World Cup, set for Aug. 20 to Sept. 5 in England.

BLUE BOMBERS The Winnipeg Blue Bombers released veteran middle linebacker Barrin Simpson yesterday. Simpson spent four seasons in Winnipeg, appearing in 52 regular-season games, three playoff contests and a Grey Cup.

BILLS Buffalo Bills cornerback Terrence McGee has been placed on injured reserve because of a rotator cuff injury. The team also bolstered its banged-up quarterback ranks by re-signing former third-stringer Gibran Hamdan. The moves were announced yesterday as Buffalo prepares to play at Atlanta this weekend.

BOXING The megafight between Manny Pacquiao and Floyd Mayweather Jr. has been thrown into jeopardy. Mayweather's camp is demanding the fighters submit to Olympic-type drug testing in the weeks leading up to the bout.

SOCCER Canada will play an international soccer friendly in Jamaica on Jan. 31. The game will take place in Kingston at the National Soccer Stadium. Canada and Jamaica most recently faced met for the opening match of the 2009 CONCACAF Gold Cup. Canada won 1-0.

STEELERS Wide receiver Joey Galloway has been added to the Pittsburgh Steelers' roster as the replacement for Limas Sweed. Sweed was placed on injured reserve Monday with a non-football related illness. Coach Mike Tomlin would not reveal any details of Sweed's condition yesterday.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

SCOREBOARD

NBA

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS

Atlanta 112 Minnesota 87
Boston 103 Indiana 94
Charlotte 88 Detroit 76
Memphis 121 Golden State 108
New York 88 Chicago 81
Washington 105 Philadelphia 98
Portland 85 Dallas 81
L.A. Clippers at Houston
Oklahoma City at L.A. Lakers

NHL

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS

San Jose 3 Chicago 2
Anaheim at Colorado
Nashville at Vancouver



Warning issued for child seat car carriers

A product advisory notice has been issued in Canada for certain Dorel infant car seats, which may pose a potential safety hazard due to a handle that may loosen and come off when the seat is used as an infant carrier. CANADIANDRIVER.COM

Metro Drive



Saab sale fails

Saab Automobile AB will be closed down, following an announcement by General Motors that its sale to Spyker Cars could not be completed.

CANADIANDRIVER.COM

EDITOR: KUMAR SAHA, KUMAR.SAHA@METRONEWS.CA

Nissan Leaf fun, agile ride

MICHAEL GOETZ
for Metro Canada

You only have one chance to make a first impression.

Show up for a job interview, for a coveted position in the poultry industry, with untrimmed nose hair and a "Meat is Murder" t-shirt, and well, your goose will be cooked, so to speak.

The ramifications of an unsatisfactory first impression weren't lost on the brain trust at Nissan.

That first drive, that first ownership experience with all-electric Nissan Leaf, has to be completely satisfactory, or the chances of moving electric vehicles to the mainstream will be stopped in its tracks, says Ian Forsythe, a product specialist at Nissan Canada.

So we have an all-electric vehicle that aims to look and drive pretty close to how consumers would expect a five-passenger, front-drive family sedan to look and drive (with one major exception, which we'll get to shortly).

I had a chance to check if Nissan managed its objective, via a brief fling in a Leaf prototype in a parking lot in Vancouver. Yes, a pylon course. I took two laps, for a combined seat time of about one minute and 37 seconds. Not quite like a lap around the famed Nurburgring, but enough to confirm that Leaf is fun to drive and will not unnerve anybody. It handles very much like every other front-drive sedan — agile, but with just the right amount of dialed-in understeer to make the vehicle predictable and safe.

It's even hard to detect its regenerative braking system. Other electric vehicles and hybrids have more aggressive regenerative systems, which means they essentially "brake" the vehicle anytime you're off the "gas," to convert every little bit of kinetic energy to electricity. The Leaf coasts more like a conventional car.

The prototype we drove had Versa bodywork over its Leaf electric platform. A full-blown Leaf was available for viewing, and you can see that, while it is different, it's not scary different. It doesn't need a front radiator grille or a tailpipe, so it has neither. The plug-in "socket" is behind a flap on its front hood, which is short and low for aerodynamic purposes.

The one electric motor is fitted up front, but very low in the body, as are the batteries. Other EVs and hybrids use cylinder-shaped batteries, but the lithium-ion battery pack in the Leaf is formed in thin, laminated sheets. This keeps the batteries cool, which is so necessary for longevity and reliability.

But back to our parking lot run… The one defining characteristic of all electric vehicles is "instantaneous" torque. Depress the "gas" pedal, or whatever you want to call it, and the Leaf shoots forward like it was suddenly hitched to a moving transport truck. And Nissan even dialed a bit off the experience, to make it less surprising, and more like something we're used to…

So maybe you want one? Well you can't have one. At least not until the early fall of 2011.

Why the wait? It's back to that first impression thing. Nissan and other EV makers need infrastructure to develop in some Canadian cities, so owners actually have places to recharge their vehicles, other than at their homes. Any other way, and EVs will blow their first, good shot at stardom and it's back to dinner theatre.



The 2011 Nissan Leaf needs infrastructure to develop in some Canadian cities, so owners actually have places to recharge their vehicles, other than at their homes.





Above, the plug-in outlet for the 2011 Nissan Leaf, positioned short and low. Right, the interior of the car,

2010 Nissan Leaf

Type: 5-door hatchback
Powertrain: 80 kilowatt AC electric motor, laminated lithium-ion battery pack (the equivalent of about 106 hp and 207 lb-ft of torque)
Charging times: About 8 hours on 220-volt current
Range: 160 km per full charge
Top Speed: Over 140 km/h

Highlights

- Zero Emissions
- Not available until late 2011
- Vancouver gets first Canadian units

Top vehicles of the decade...for now, anyway

AutoPilot



This decade is just about toast. So time for another list — the top vehicles of the decade. I wish I had a definitive one to offer you.

Every time I examined the contenders on my list, I would kick some out, and pull others in.

So consider the following only my "current for the moment" nominations for vehicles with impact and/or panache, that were born between 2000 and 2009…

The third-generation **Toyota Prius** (2004-2009) was the one that cemented it as the hybrid poster boy. The two previous generations had little impact, but this one debuted an iconic profile, pushed hybrids into the public consciousness, and eventually proved that hybrids could stand up to long years of use (and abuse).

The first-generation **Nissan Murano** (2002-2007) was not the first crossover, but definitely the most attractive and appealing one so far produced. It demonstrated a new and very successful mainstream and classy direction for crossovers — and one that had nothing to do with mud. Net result: unibody crossovers rule, body-on-frame SUVs drool.

The **Bugatti Veyron** (2005-2008) was built to impress: 8.0-litre,16-cylinder engine, 1,001 horsepower, and a top speed of 407.9 km/h. It is beyond desirable and virtually unobtainable. It also has a decent stereo, and looks pretty good in blue..

This decade was just another one when **Honda Civic** rocked the house. It is far and away Canada's best selling car of the decade, and for good reason.

Same thing for the **Ford F-150** — it is easily the top selling truck nameplate of the decade, and continues to stay in front of a very determined group of competitors. This Ford also pioneered the concept that truck interiors, particularly crew cabs, need not be stark places with rock-hard seats and no amenities.

The next two cars on our list — the re-born **Ford Thunderbird** and **Mini** — both pushed the notion that "retro" styling has great appeal and can be done effectively in a modern way.

Michael Goetz has been writing about cars and editing automotive publications for over 20 years. He lives in Toronto with his family and a neglected 1967 Jaguar E-type.

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Offers vary by model. Not all combinations apply. See dealer for details.



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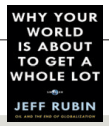
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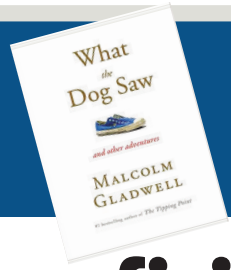
Offers available at participating dealers only. Dealer may sell or lease for less. Factory order may be required. Limited time offers. Offers may be cancelled at any time without notice. See participating Dealer for details. Offers apply to Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland & Prince Edward Island residents only. *Purchase a new 2010 Ford Fusion SE Manual 6sp $25,999. Taxes payable on full amount of purchase price before delivery allowance. $0 and dealer contribution of $500 deducted. $1,950 freight and air tax included. Offer excludes license, insurance, registration, PPSA, administration fees and all applicable taxes. †Purchase a new 2010 Ford Focus SE Sedan 4dr Manual 5sp $16,999. Taxes payable on full amount of purchase price before delivery allowance. $0 and dealer contribution of $500 deducted. $1,950 freight and air tax included. Offer excludes license, insurance, registration, PPSA, administration fees and all applicable taxes. ††From November 2, 2010 to January 4, 2011, up to $0 first month's purchase finance payment at your participating Ford dealer and for the remaining 71 months of the total 72 month purchase finance contract, receive 0% APR purchase financing on all new 2010 Ford Focus SE sedan for a maximum of 72 months to qualified retail customers. OAC from Ford Credit. Not all buyers will qualify for the lowest APR payment. Purchase finance from monthly payment is $266.00. Monthly payment divided by two gives you a bi-weekly payment of $133.00, with a down payment of $0 or equivalent trade-in. Down payment may be financed based on approved credit. Cost of borrowing is $0 or APR of 0% and total to be repaid is $38,886 (after delivery allowance of $0 deducted and $0 first month payment). All purchase finance offers include freight and air tax of $1,450 but exclude license, fuel fill charge, insurance, registration, PPSA, administration fees and all applicable taxes. Taxes are payable on the full amount of the purchase price. Twice a month payments are only available through Internet banking and bi-monthly banking. If offered by your financial institution. The customer is required to sign a monthly payment contract and to ensure that the total monthly payment occurs by payment due date. Twice a month payments can be made by making two (2) payments of 50% of the monthly payment by the monthly payment due date. Dealer may sell or lease. The Ford Get In and Drive Year End Event ("Year End Event") is in effect from November 3, 2010 to January 4, 2011 at participating Ford of Canada Dealerships. During the Year End Event one or more combinations of $0 first month's payment, 0% Annual Percentage Rate (APR), purchase financing for up to 72 months, $0 down payment or $0 due at signing will apply to the purchase finance or lease of select new 2010 Ford vehicles. Offers vary by model and not all combinations will apply. Offers are available to customers taking retail incentives and may only be available on approved credit. OAC from Ford Credit. Purchase financing and lease offers include freight and air tax, but exclude license, fuel fill charge, insurance, PPSA, registration, administration fees and all applicable taxes. These offers are subject to vehicle availability and may be cancelled at any time without notice. Dealer may sell or lease for less. Limited time offers. Some conditions apply. See your Ford Dealer for complete details. ‡Purchase finance or lease an eligible new 2010 Ford or Lincoln vehicle through Ford Credit between November 3, 2010 and January 4, 2011 and get first monthly payment paid up to a maximum amount of $500 ($750 ($1,000 ($2,250 ($1,500 per eligible 2010 Ford Focus, Fusion, Mustang excluding GT500, Taurus, Escape, Ranger, Transit Connect) / Edge, Flex, Explorer 4dr, Explorer Sport Trac, E-Series) / Expedition, F-150 excluding SVT Raptor, F-Series Super Duty excluding F-450 & F-550 chassis cabs, Lincoln MKZ, Lincoln MKX, Lincoln MKT) / Lincoln MKS) / (Lincoln MKD) / (Lincoln Navigator). Offer not available to cash purchase customers. Offer is only available on approved credit. ††$0 due at signing, when leasing or purchase financing, offers include freight and air tax, but exclude license, insurance, fuel fill charge, registration, PPSA, administration fees and all applicable taxes. Freight and air tax charges to be included in the total amount to be financed. Excluded variable charges can be amortized over a purchase financing term, but are required up front charges for lease customers. See your Ford Dealer for complete details. ‡‡$0 Security Deposit on the lease of most new 2010 Ford vehicles (excluding 2010 Ford Shelby GT 500, Transit Connect, E-Series Cutaway, F-150 Raptor, F-350 Chassis Cab's Gas & Diesel Engines, F-450 & F-550 Chassis Cab's Gas & Diesel Engines) effective November 3, 2010 through January 4, 2011. Security Deposit may be required by Ford Credit based on customer credit terms and conditions. ▼5.9 L/49 MPG relates to the 2009 Focus SFI fusion S mode. ▼Estimated fuel consumption ratings based on Transport Canada approved test methods. Actual fuel consumption may vary based on road conditions, vehicle loading and driving habits. Vehicles equipped with 5-speed manual transmission. Actual fuel efficiency may vary based on driving conditions, vehicle load, and certain vehicle accessories. Midsize class per R.L. Polk Canada, Inc. (Canada). Fuel consumption ratings are based on Transport Canada approved test methods. Actual fuel consumption may vary based on road conditions, vehicle loading and driving habits. Midsize class per R.L. Polk Canada, Inc. (U.S.) / Intermediate per R.L. Polk Canada, Inc. (Canada). Fuel consumption ratings are based on Transport Canada approved test methods. Actual fuel efficiency may vary based on driving conditions and the addition of certain vehicle accessories. ■Some mobile phones and some digital media players may not be fully compatible - check www.syncmyride.com for a listing of mobile phones, media players and features supported. Driving while distracted can result in loss of vehicle control, accident and injury. Ford recommends that drivers use caution when using mobile phones, even with voice commands. Only use mobile phones and other devices, even with voice commands, not essential to driving when it is safe to do so. Sync is optional on most new Ford vehicles. Microsoft is a registered trademark of Microsoft Corporation. Dealer may sell or lease for less. Factory order may be required. Limited time offers. Offers may be cancelled at any time without notice. Some conditions may apply to the Graduate Recognition Program. See Dealer for details. Atlantic Ford, 6595 Bedford Highway, Bedford, Nova Scotia B4A 3Y4.



Even more business books for the holidays

For those who work in the financial sector Jeff Rubin is legendary. As CIBC World Markets' chief economist for over 20 years, Rubin's predictions were often unimaginable, yet on the mark. Check out his latest Why Your World is About to get a Whole lot Smaller. CRAIG LUND/FOR METRO CANADA

Workology



More biz book pics

Malcolm Gladwell has become one of Canada's most prolific and successful non fiction authors with his best selling books, Tipping Point, Blink, Outliers and ultimately his latest addition — What the Dog Saw. A perfect gift for the jetsetter or commuter. CRAIG LUND/FOR METRO CANADA

EDITOR: DOUGLAS.DUNLOP@METRONEWS.CA

BookReview

Biz book pics for the holidays

Age of Persuasion
How Marketing Ate Our Culture
Author: Terry O'Reilly & Mike Tennant
Publisher: Knopf Canada
Price: $32

If this book is anything like Terry O'Reilly's radio show, it will be a sure crowd pleaser.

Six Pixels of Separation
Author: Mitch Joel
Publisher: Grand Central
Price: $32.99

Mitch Joel is marketer cum author. As the president of a succaessful interactive marketing firm, Joel's book argues that with tools like Facebook the world is even smaller.

Switch
Author: Dan and Chip Heath
Publisher: Random House
Price: $32

In this book, the Heath's examine the concept of changing strategy when one is already successful.

Craig Lund, a director with the staffing firm Marketers on Demand, can be reached at craig.lund@marketersondemand.com

In Canada, even firings and layoffs are polite

JON TATTRIE
for Metro Canada

In the new movie Up in the Air, George Clooney plays a flying executioner patrolling the skies above America's unravelling economy, touching down only to drop the ax on the luckless casualties of the crisis.

Gary Agnew is Canada's answer to Clooney's American horseman of the economic apocalypse, but the veteran of the downsizing industry says such brutishness would never fly in Canada. Where U.S. firms may hire hitmen like Clooney to pull the trigger, Canadian bosses find the courage to do it themselves — with help.

"The movie has got a U.S. slant to it and is an exaggerated portrait," says Agnew, a partner at the Calgary-based human-resources company Cenera. "We don't go in and fire people. We train managers in how to do it humanely."

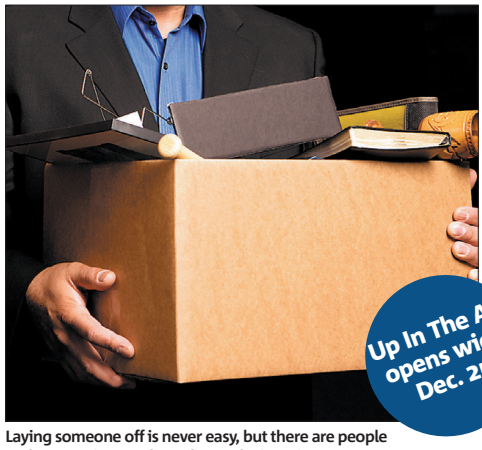
After the layoffs, Cenera helps former staff regroup. "I've been doing this for 30 years. Let me tell you: 95 per cent of the people I have worked with have gone to positions that are far better than the positions they were in," Agnew says.

That's what gives him his cheery disposition: He loves helping people turn a career crisis into a career-advancing pivot. But it's not easy. "I think most of my colleagues carry a fairly heavy bag full of emotions because we feel the pain people have been through," he admits.

Genevieve Belben heads up DBM's Atlantic Region and has overseen countless downsizing operations. Local branches of the global career management company handle small-scale layoffs, but Belben flies in when an East Coast company is closing, meaning she doesn't quite share the itinerant life of Clooney's character.

Like Agnew, she rarely participates in the actual terminations. "We're the future focus. We don't want to be tied to the bad news," she says from her Halifax office. "We're retained by a corporation … but we work for the employee."

But no matter how many times she's been through it, D-day is always a bad day. But still, "change is not a bad thing — change spells opportunity," she says.



Laying someone off is never easy, but there are people and companies out there that make it easier.

"We don't go in and fire people. We train managers in how to do it humanely."
Cenera's Gary Agnew

WorkplaceLaw



Daniel Lublin

Metronews.ca/workplacelaw

Employees can make mistakes too

COLUMN Employees are often the author of their own misfortune. Despite my cautionary writings, they routinely sign contracts replete with unfavourable terms. By doing so, they unknowingly agree to be eliminated with minimum notice, demoted, or banished to far away jurisdictions, see their salary slashed and prevented from competing with their employer following their departure — all with legal impunity. But, here is one (among many) example where to the contrary.

Once an employee begins work, it is often too late to have him or her sign an agreement, even if on the first day. After a series of interviews, the CIBC extended Trusty Francis an offer of employment. However, on his first day at work he was presented with a number of forms and agreements that attempted to limit his entitlement to three months' salary if he was fired. At trial, the court found that Francis's employment contract was consummated when he agreed to the first offer of employment and, because nothing of new value was given to him when he showed up at work, the forms and agreements he was told to sign were unenforceable. Otherwise, the court reasoned, an employer could unilaterally impose new terms of employment at any time and an employee would be without leverage to negotiate.

I have prevailed in court by raising the inference that a contract was signed without proper consent. Don't be reluctant to negotiate terms and have any contract reviewed by a lawyer before signing your name.

SEE METRONEWS.CA/WORKPLACELAW TO READ THE FULL ARTICLE.

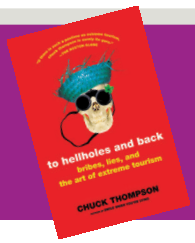
Daniel A. Lublin is an employment lawyer with Whitten & Lublin LLP. Reach him at dan@toronto-employmentlawyer.com.



Going to the Games?
Just in time for the 2010 Winter Olympic Games, Zagat has released an updated guide to Vancouver, with recommendations for restaurants and attractions in the city as well as for the ski resort town of Whistler and for beautiful Vancouver Island. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ZAGAT RATED

Travel



Going to hellholes in a hand basket

Author Chuck Thompson sets out to discover if some of the world's most ill-reputed travel destinations live up to their bad raps. Whether he's diving head long into an Indian monsoon or traveling across the Congo in the company of a notorious dictator's bodyguard, To Hellholes and Back delivers Thompson's trademark combination of hilarious stories and wildly provocative opinions, as well as some surprising observations about America's evolving place in the world. METRO NEWS SERVICES

EDITOR: BEN.RYCROFT@METRONEWS.CA

Getting peace of mind

Le Sport resort promises to inspire and rejuvenate its patrons

ANNE DIMON
for Metro Canada

The tag line reads: "Give us your body for a week, and we will give you back your mind." But what I'm wondering as I arrive for my two-night stay and am welcomed by a boisterous chorus of crickets is if I'm here for just two days, do they give me back a piece of my mind?

Located on the extreme northern side of the island of St. Lucia about a 20-minute drive from the capital of Castries, and about an hour away from the famous Piton volcanic peaks, Le Sport opened in the mid-'80s with health and wellness front and centre. Back then the concept of taking a holiday to launch a healthier lifestyle had not yet gone main stream.

Clearly, the all-inclusive Le Sport was a resort ahead of its time.

In addition to the expected beach resort activities — kayaking, sailing, scuba, for instance — are those that keep many guests returning for an annual retreat. There are various levels of yoga, meditation, spinning and stretching classes, Tai Chi, introductions to fencing and martial arts ... the list goes on and on and on.

Guests are invited to do as much or as little as they want. Nothing is forced but there are a few not so subtle encouragements here and there. For instance, there are no TV sets in any of the resort's 154 guest rooms.


ANNE DIMON/FOR METRO CANADA

The secluded resort offers various levels of yoga, meditation and stretching classes.

45 The number of therapists who work at Le Sport. They feature wellness practitioners brought in from different parts of the globe including those that specialize in Reiki, Balinese therapies, Ayurveda, acupuncture, nutrition/iridology and hypno and psycho therapies

In addition to the wide range of programs, one of the main points of distinction of this beachfront all-inclusive is that spa treatments are included. Guests are entitled to one spa treatment a day as part of the package. There are seven treatments to select from including 50-minute scrubs, facials and massages. The resort stresses this is not a restrictive place but a place to make subtle but significant changes that can be taken home and implemented into everyday life.

Peace of mind is an added bonus.

Anne Dimon is a spa and wellness travel writer and editor of traveltowellness.com

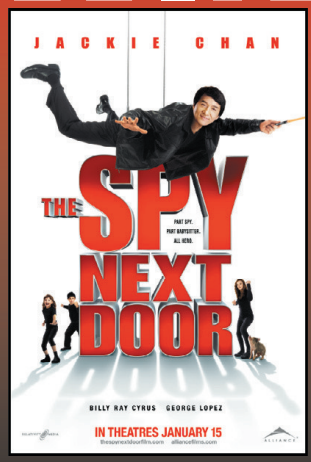

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Watersports, such as kayaking and sailing, are popular choices.


ANNE DIMON/FOR METRO CANADA

Le Sport offers introduction to fencing courses.

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Sesame Street actor dies of cancer

Alaina Reed Hall, who portrayed Olivia Robinson on Sesame Street for 12 years, has died. Reed Hall was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2007 and succumbed Thursday at a Santa Monica, Calif., hospital, her husband, Tamim Amini, told the Los Angeles Times. TVGUIDE.COM

Entertainment



Setting records

Miley Cyrus has broken the record for the largest ever attendance at London's O2 Arena. She played to 16,196 fans during the third of five sold-out concerts at the venue this month. FEMALEFIRST.CO.UK

EDITOR: DEAN.LISK@METRONEWS.CA

Trends that defined the decade

iPods, tattoos, reality TV among things that changed our lives

Was it only a decade ago that a blackberry was a mere summer fruit? That green was, well, a colour, and reality TV was that one show sandwiched between music videos on MTV?

There were, of course, huge political and social upheavals that roiled our world in the past decade. But there were also the gradual lifestyle changes that you don't always notice — kind of like watching a child grow older. Here's a look at some things that changed our lives:

APPS: There's an app for that! The phrase comes from Apple iPhone advertising, but could apply to the entire decade's gadget explosion, from laptops to GPS systems.

BLOG: I blog, you blog, he blogs ... How did we spend our time before blogging? There are more than 100 million of these web logs out there in cyberspace.

BLACKBERRIES: Considered essential by corporate CEOs and moms planning playdates. Introduced in 2002, the smartphone version is now used by more than 28 million people, according to its Waterloo, Ont.-based maker, Research In Motion Ltd.

CROCS: Those ubiquitous plastic clogs debuted in 2002 and became the shoes you loved to hate. Kids love 'em, but there are web groups dedicated to their destruction.

FACEBOOK: Can you believe this social networking site was once limited only to Harvard students? Now it's a time-sucking obsession for more than 300 million users globally.

FOODIE: It's not just that guy in the White House who liked arugula — this was the decade of the foodie, when we all developed gourmet palates. Even a burgers went gourmet.

GOOGLE: This was the decade that Google became a part of our brain function. You know that guy who was in that movie — when was it? Just Google it.

IPODS: An icon of the digital age, it's hard to believe this portable media player was first launched in 2001. Six years later the 100 millionth iPod was sold.

REALITY TV: We became addicted to reality TV, from the feuding Gosselins of Jon&Kate Plus 8 to American Idol to Project Runway. At decade's end, the Heenes of Balloon Boy fame and the Salahis of gatecrashing fame give reality TV some unwanted attention.

TATTOOS: It started innocently enough — maybe a butterfly on the shoulder or a tribal symbol on the bicep. A few characters from the Chinese alphabet later it seemed any hipster who really meant it had a full sleeve of tattoos. The trend extended to middle-aged moms and even tween idol Miley Cyrus.

TEXTING: R u still rding this sty? Hope u r. This is the decade we start communicating in the shorthand of text messages. Get used to it: Email is so '00s.



Twitter (co-founder Evan Williams, above) helped define the decade.

TWITTER: The new social network introduced tweets, retweets, follows and trending topics — as long as it fit in 140 characters.

WII: In a sea of video games, this simple console became the decade's breakout hit by appealing to the non-gaming masses. Wiis became a centre of family gaming, home fitness and even senior socializing.

WIKIPEDIA: A boon to lazy students everywhere, the open-source encyclopedia used the masses to police its entries and keep them accurate.

YOUTUBE: The video-sharing site was born in 2005. Political candidates in 2008 even had their on channels.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

HA	H	D	B	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00
12/23/09 primetime	31	31	31 ABC	News Center 5	World News	Inside Edition	Chronicle	Grinch Stole	The Middle	Modern Family	The Middle	Cougar Town
	7	7	7 ASN	The Road to Avonlea		Sue Thomas: F.B.Eye		*Lives of the Saints* (2005, Drama) Sophia Loren.				Atlantis
	11	11	11 CBC	Wheel Fortune	Jeopardy! (N)	*Scrooge* ★★★ (1951, Fantasy) Alastair Sim.				CBC News: The National		The Hour
	2	2	2 CBC-F	Pyramide (SC)	Union-force	La Petite vie	*Le Tour du monde en 80 jours* ★★ (2004, Aventures) Jackie Chan. (SC)					Le Téléjournal
	32	32	32 CBS	WBZ News (N)	Evening News	Wheel Fortune	Jeopardy! (N)	A Home for the Holidays		Criminal Minds (HDTV)		CSI: NY
	69	69	69 CFTM	TVA nouvelles	Vidéos	Poule-oeufs or	Km/h (SC)	*Sans aviron* ★★ (2004, Comédie) Seth Green, Dax Shepard.				TVA nouvelles
	6	6	6 CIHF	Entertainment	ET Canada	Glee (HDTV)		*Christmas Town* (2008, Romance-Comedy), Garry Chalk				News Final (N)
	9	9	9 CJCH	Corner Gas	Degrassi: TNG	Rita MacNeil		*Home for the Holidays* (2005, Drama) Sean Young. (DVS)				CTV News
	10	10	10 ELTV	Holy Redeemer Carol Service (N)			Au Natural (N)	Doc Talk (N)	Community Matters			
	36	36	36 FOX	Seinfeld	The Simpsons	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	Glee "Preggers" (HDTV)		Glee (HDTV)		Fox First
	12	12	12 NBC	News (N)	NBC News	Access H.	Extra (N)	Mercy (HDTV)		Mercy (HDTV)		Jay Leno Show
	29	29	29 NW	(6) Power & Politics		Connect Today's biggest stories. (N)				CBC News: The National		Princess Diana
	4	4	4 PBS-B	PBS NewsHour (N)		Greater Boston	Ask This Old	Christmas Tree Lighting		Great Performances Doomed lovers. (N)		
	35	35	35 PBS-D	PBS NewsHour (N)		Business Rpt.	Worldfocus	Christmas With King Family		Great Performances Doomed lovers. (N)		
	68	68	68 TQS	Guerre clans	Le Mur	Merlin (N) (SC)		Noël en famille (SC)		Popcorn TV (N)	Popcorn TV (N)	Guerre clans
news	23	96	96 BNN	Business News	Headline	Market Call Tonight		The Close	Market Call	Squeeze Play		Business News
	18	18	18 CNN	Situation Room-Wolf Blitzer		CNN Tonight (N)		Campbell Brown (N)		Larry King Live (N)		Cooper 360
sports	54	54	54 GOLF	Golf Central	Big Break		Big Break		Big Break		Big Break	
	52	52	52 RSE	Connected W-Prime Time		NHL Hockey Ottawa Senators at Pittsburgh Penguins. (HDTV) (Live)					MMA Conn	Sportsnet Con.
	55	55	55 SCOR	HSR	Covers Experts	FullTiltPoker.net Million		College Football: San Diego County Credit Union Poinsettia Bowl				
	45	45	45 SPD	Unique Whips		Pass Time	Pass Time	Dangerous Drives (HDTV)		Pass Time	Pass Time	Wrecked
	53	53	53 TSN	Off the Record	SportsCentre	Hockey IIHF World Junior Pre-Comp: Canada vs. Czech Republic. (Live)					NHL Hockey: Blues at Flames	
family	43	43	43 FAM	Han. Montana	Wizards-Place	Sonny Chance	Suite Life	Overruled!	Han. Montana	Wizards-Place	Latest Buzz	Ned's School
	44	44	44 TOON	Christmas Carol: Scrooge		Annabelle's Wish			Wayside	Futurama	King of the Hill	American Dad
	26	26	26 TREE	Frst Snw-Wint	Santa Coming to Town		Guess-Jess	Emily Yeung	Night Garden	Lost in Snow	Fluffy Gardens	Frst Snw-Wint
	27	27	27 YTV	Magic Gift of the Snowman		The Santa Claus Brothers		A Miser Brothers' Christmas		Fries That?	Mon. Warriors	Family Biz
cable variety	16	16	16 A&E	Bounty Hunter	Bounty Hunter	Dog the Bounty Hunter		Dog the Bounty Hunter		Dog the Bounty Hunter		Steven Seagal
	70	70	70 APTN	APTN National News (N)		Investigates	Winterlude 2009		Milestones, Memories, and Moving Forward			Awards
	50	50	50 BET	One on One	One on One	One on One	One on One	One on One	*Inside Man* ★★★ (2006, Suspense) Denzel Washington.			
	37	37	37 BRVO	Wind at My Back		Arts & Minds	Bravo!Videos	Johnny Cash Christmas		Wingfield	Star Portraits	White Collar
	25	25	25 CMT	Home for Christmas		Amer. Funniest Home Videos		*Moonlight and Mistletoe* (2008, Drama), Tom Arnold Premiere.				Home Improve.
	49	49	49 COM	Just for Laughs		Air Farce	22 Minutes	Corner Gas	22 Minutes	The Simpsons	South Park	RENO 911! (N)
	153	153	153 COURT	A Few Good Men and Women		Situation Critical		Cops Uncut	Dumb Criminal	Declassified		Critical
	38	38	38 DISC	How It's Made	How It's Made	Daily Planet (N)		Mighty Ships		Peak to Peak: Gondola		Mayday
	34	48	48 HGTV	Extreme Makeover: Home		House Hunters	Property Virgin	Unsellable	Intervention	Property Virgin	Unsellable	House Hunters
	46	46	46 HIST	Outlaw Bikers		Ice Pilots NWT (N)		Life After People		Ice Road Truckers		Ice Pilots NWT
	17	17	17 MM	Gossip Girl (HDTV)		Make It or Break It		disBAND	Video on Trial	Video on Trial (N)		My Date With...
	19	19	19 MMM	Top 50 Videos of the 00s (N)		Gene Simmons	Gene Simmons	Gene Simmons	Gene Simmons	Gene Simmons	Gene Simmons	Entourage
	201	201	201 M1	(6:10) *Powder Blue*		*Fred Claus* ★★ (2007, Comedy) Vince Vaughn.				*National Treasure: Book of Secrets* ★★		
	48	23	23 OLN	Mantracker		Ghost Hunters		Bounty Hunter	Bounty Hunter	Survivorman		Ghost Hunters
	51	51	51 PEACH	The Office	Name Is Earl	Family Guy	Family Guy	Law & Order: SVU		The Office	The Office	*The Holiday*
	206	206	206 PIX	(6:20) *California Split*		(8:10) *Top Gun* ★★★ (1986, Adventure) Tom Cruise.				*Hard Target* ★★ (1993, Action)		
	67	67	67 RDI	RDI monde	RDI économie	24 Heures en 60 minutes		Grands reportages (SC)		Le Téléjournal (SC)		RDI économie
	39	39	39 SHOW	Trailer Park	Trailer Park	The Outer Limits		The Guard "The Hold"		Cra$h & Burn		Bones
	40	40	40 SLICE	Skin Deep	Skin Deep	Rich Bride, Poor Bride		Nearly Dead	Nearly Dead	Newlywed	Newlywed	In Laws
	47	47	47 SPACE	Stargate SG-1		Stargate Atlantis (DVS)		Star Trek: Voyager		*Shaun of the Dead* (2004, Comedy)		
	14	14	14 SPIKE	*Star Wars: Episode I -- The Phantom Menace* ★★ (1999, Science Fiction) Liam Neeson.						*Star Wars: Episode II -- Attack of the Clones*		
	57	98	98 STAR	etalk's 2009	TMZ (N)	Look-A-Like	TMZ	The Ellen DeGeneres Show		The View (HDTV) (N)		Dr. Oz Show
	21	21	21 TLC	Say Yes-Dress	Say Yes-Dress	Tiger Woods		Mega-Tsunami: 5 Years Later		Lottery Changed My Life		Fortune
	56	34	34 TROP	Project Runway Canada		King	King	The Outer Limits		ET Canada	Whatever	Family Guy
	20	20	20 TV5	Que.-champion	Journal de Fr2	La Vie est un cirque		Petits meurtres en famille			Signé Chanel	
	28	28	28 V	Emily of New Moon		Murder, She Wrote		Keeping Up	Wait for God	*A Christmas Carol* (2000, Fantasy)		
	60	97	97 VIVA	Da Vinci's Inquest		Cold Case "Wishing"		Missing "Analysis"		The Closer "Round File"		Cold Case
	22	22	22 W	Confidential	Divine Design	*A Wind at My Back Christmas* (2001, Drama), Tyrone Savage				*He Sees You When You're Sleeping* (2002)		
	251	251	251 WGN	WGN Evening News		Two/Half Men	Family Guy	One Tree Hill (HDTV)		Gossip Girl (HDTV)		WGN News

critics'corner

The 11th Annual A Home for the Holidays With Faith Hill
Grammy and Country Music Association Award winner Faith Hill headlines for the second time with this feel-good hour that celebrates the joys of adoption from the perspectives of the adoptive families and the children who finally have found stable homes. Joining Hill are musicians Mary J. Blige, Michael Franti, Reba McEntire, Shakira and Carrie Underwood. 9 PM on CBS



Scrooge
Miserly Ebenezer Scrooge gets a long-overdue attitude adjustment when a trio of ghosts visits him on Christmas Eve in this 1951 adaptation of Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol," anchored by Alastair Sim's tour de force performance in the title role. Kathleen Harrison, Mervyn Johns, Michael Hordern and Hermione Baddeley co-star. 8 PM on CBC

Christmas Town
And she thought the Borg were creepy. Nicole de Boer ("Star Trek: Deep Space Nine") stars in this bit of holiday fluff as a career woman and single mother who pays a reluctant visit to her father in a town that's overflowing with so much Christmas spirit it's scary. And no, it's not something in the water. Patrick Muldoon ("Starship Troopers") also stars. 9 PM on CIHF

101.3 THE BOUNCE
Weekdays @ 9pm
Interactive NINE@9
For December 22nd
9 Faber Drive - Give Him Up
8 David Guetta Ft Akon - Sexy Chick
7 Drake Ft Kevin Kossom - I Get Money
6 Aleesia - Bubble Gum
5 Jason Derulo - In My Head
4 Hedley - Don't Talk to Strangers
3 Down With Webster - Rich Girl$
2 Ke$ha - Tik Tok
1 Lady Gaga - Bad Romance
WE WANT YOU!
You could guest host the Interactive NINE@9 with Kid Craig.
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Cameron plans Avatar sequels
James Cameron plans to make two further installments to the Avatar franchise. The award-winning filmmaker plans to turn the alien love story into a trilogy, but hasn't started work yet. FEMALEFIRST.CO.UK



Chipmunks sequel lacks soul, story



Alvin & The Chipmunks: The Squeakquel picks up where the original movie left off.

Alvin & The Chipmunks: **The Squeakquel**

Director: Betty Thomas
Stars: Zachary Levi
Classification: G
Rating: ½

On the web

- For an Alvin & The Chipmunks: The Squeakquel trailer, photos and screen times — or to buy tickets — visit metronews.ca/movies

STEVE GOW
for Metro Canada

REVIEW When Alvin and the Chipmunks took in over $350 million US at the global box office in 2007, the long-time radio gimmick-turned-Saturday morning cartoon-turned big screen blockbuster was pretty much guaranteed a sequel.

Instead, we got The Squeakquel. And if you find that kind of nauseatingly cute wordplay annoying, wait until you sit through the soulless money-grab that is The Squeakquel.

Picking up pretty much where the first movie left off, The Squeakquel sees the computer-animated pop-star rodents's adopted guardian (Jason Lee) quickly hospitalized after an on-stage accident.

This leaves the Chipmunks in the incapable hands of cousin Toby (Zachary Levi of TV's Chuck), an expendable videogame-obsessed character with all the charm and intellect of a boiled potato.

Sent back to school, the Chipmunks soon face an assortment of stereotypical circumstances (bullying, cliques, etc). But most noteworthy is the introduction of the Chipettes — a triad of female chipmunks that share their counterparts' talent for singing high-pitched pop music.

I suppose they're intended to be adorable but there's something slightly troubling about seeing scantily-clad cartoon characters mimic the booty-shaking moves of Beyoncé's Single Ladies. What's next for toddlers' entertainment? Minnie Mouse krumping to My Humps? What this film is really missing though is a story: Merely spinning the gimmick of a group of gophers crooning contemporary hits in an irritating high-pitch may initially excite a few pre-pubescents but parents be warned — as you search your purse for earplugs, even the little one may disappear out of sheer restlessness and boredom.

Chipmunks screen times

- Bayers Lake: Wed 12:45-3:50-6:35-9:15 Thu 12:25-2:50
- Lower Sackville: Wed 12:15-2:20-4:40-6:50-9 Thu 12:15-2:20
- Dartmouth Crossing: Wed 1:25-4:10-7:10-9:40 Thu 12:15-2:55
- Truro: Wed 12-2:20-6:50-9 Thu 12-2:20
- Bridgewater: Wed 1:20-3:30-7-9:10 Thu 1:20-3:30
- *Complete listings are also available at metronews.ca/movies.*



Police give Wood assault warning



Wood

PEOPLE A spokesman for Rolling Stones guitarist Ronnie Wood says he has been given a formal warning for assault.

David Rigg said police gave Wood the formal warning or caution yesterday after he was arrested earlier this month for assault near his home in Esher in southern England.

Wood divorced last month. His marriage collapsed after he started dating a young Russian woman. A caution is a formal warning given by police. It is not a criminal conviction but police will keep a record of it for five years. Wood said in a statement that he is "greatly relieved this matter is resolved."

When asked about Wood, Surrey Police said that a 62-year-old man had been cautioned over a domestic incident.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Randy Quaid, wife plead not guilty to fraud charges

A prosecutor says actor Randy Quaid and his wife Evi have pleaded not guilty to felony charges of defrauding an innkeeper.

The couple appeared yesterday in a Santa Barbara courtroom.

Senior Deputy District Attorney Lee Carter says they were released on $20,000 bail apiece. The sum had initially been forfeited when the Quaids failed to appear for a hearing last week.

They were taken into custody in Texas over the weekend after a previous arrest there on Sept. 24. They are accused of using an invalid credit card to defraud San Ysidro Ranch in Montecito of more than $10,000.

Their attorney, Robert Sanger, did not immediately return a call seeking comment.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Entertainment in brief

TV HBO says Ricky Gervais will be a star voice in a 13-episode animated comedy series early next year. The cable network said yesterday that The Ricky Gervais Show will be based on his wildly popular podcasts. Voices will include Gervais, longtime collaborator Stephen Merchant and their friend Karl Pilkington. Pilkington's musings often inspire the series' offbeat storylines.

BROADWAY Megan Mullally will return to Broadway in the Roundabout Theatre Company revival of Lips Together, Teeth Apart, Terrence McNally's comedy about two married couples sharing a Fourth of July weekend at a Fire Island beach house. Patton Oswalt is also in the cast. the production will open April 29 at the American Airlines Theatre.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

On real Jersey shore, everyone's a critic

On MTV's reality television show Jersey Shore, the Beachcomber Bar is a place where the clothes are skimpy and punches can fly.

But there's another reality in the resort town Seaside Heights, which is both a setting and a state of mind on the show about eight buff, tanned twenty-somethings and the havoc they create while living together for a month in a posh home.

As the show airs this month and next, the town of some 3,100 year-round residents is hushed. Most of the boardwalk businesses are closed. Only a few fishermen and some beach rehabilitation workers are out. The Ferris wheel and carnival games are shuttered.

And the people who are around this time of year say this just isn't the same place as the one on the show, which was filmed in the summer when the town's population grows tenfold with families at the beach by day and a sometimes wild club scene by night.

Just as one group of Italian-Americans has protested, claiming the show gives them a bad name, many locals think it smears the community.

"You're trying to create a family town, and you got a bunch of kids acting very rude, and it doesn't create a good image," said John LaStalla, a 44-year-old native and municipal worker.

The stars, mostly Italian-Americans with only one from New Jersey, dance, pump iron and party — a lot. They work in a T-shirt shop — a little. And their specialty is drama, whether it involves each other, the people they meet, boyfriends from home or moms. Though unscripted, there are echoes of sitcoms.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Ellen and Portia top favourite celeb couples list

Ellen DeGeneres and Portia de Rossi have a lot of fans. In a popeater.com poll asking who was the favorite celebrity couple of the year, the talk show host and actress took the top honour. POPEATER.COM

Celebrity Buzz

Murphy's death 'destroyed' husband

MORE DETAILS EMERGE Brittany Murphy's death has "destroyed" her husband, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

The late Clueless actress' spouse, British screenwriter Simon Monjack, has spoken out about his beloved wife — who died of a cardiac arrest at her Los Angeles home aged just 32 on Sunday — and his devastation at her passing.

He said on Monday that, "My world was destroyed yesterday."

Monjack also revealed life had been normal for the pair until she was found collapsed in the shower surrounded by her own vomit, although Brittany had been suffering from a sore throat recently.

Recalling how her lifeless body was discovered, he explained to Access Hollywood: "Her mother Sharon went into the bathroom because she had been in there a long time. Her mom screamed for me and I ran. Then I called 911.

"She had laryngitis. She had been tired at the end of the year. She had made a couple of movies."



Monjack has also denied rumours Brittany had been mixing with "controlling" people.

He explained: "I don't know why anyone would think that. She found love. We found love. Brittany didn't get to where Brittany was with anyone controlling her — Brittany was Brittany."

In related news, Los Angeles coroner's officials are looking into how details of an investigator's report on Brittany Murphy's death were leaked to TMZ.

Assistant Chief Coroner Ed Winter says he doesn't know how the website apparently obtained the confidential report.

METRO NEWS SERVICES



Portman grateful to be an only child?

HOW DO YOU KNOW *THEY* WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN THE TALENTED ONES, NAT? Natalie Portman doesn't believe she would have become an actress if she'd had brothers or sisters. The star is an only child and doesn't believe her parents would have been able to devote so much time to her and take her to all her auditions if she'd had siblings, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

"I had the sole attention of my parents. And you know what? If I had had brothers or sisters I would have never become an actress," she said. "My mother has accompanied me to every audition and every acting class. With more children that would have never been possible. They would have been jealous of me."



METRO NEWS SERVICES

Baldwin dishes on nude scene

GERIATRIC NUDITY: IT'S COMPLICATED Alec Baldwin was fine with going nude for his new film, It's Complicated, even if his co-star, Meryl Streep, didn't have to.

"Well, the director is a woman, and she wants to protect her leading lady," Baldwin tells USA Today. "The men are just toys to her. I was like a little Ken doll — a 51-year-old Ken doll." However, Baldwin did draw the line somewhere: The 30 Rock star reportedly insisted on a "butt double" for his nude scene.

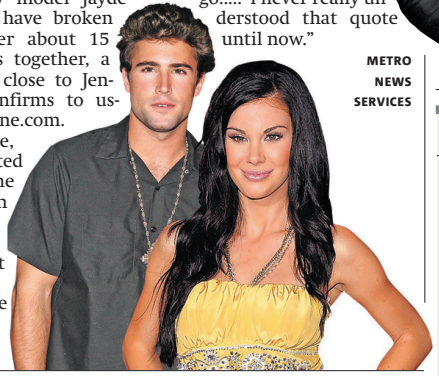


METRO WORLD NEWS

Splitsville for Hills star Jenner, girlfriend

LADIES, TRY TO CONTAIN YOURSELVES Another couple from The Hills is reality-TV history. Brody Jenner and Playboy model Jayde Nicole have broken up after about 15 months together, a source close to Jenner confirms to us-magazine.com.

Nicole, 23, hinted at the split on her Twitter account earlier in the month with a wistful entry: "'Sometimes when you truly love someone you have to let them go.....' I never really understood that quote until now."



METRO NEWS SERVICES

Is Tiger looking to mend image on SNL?

MEANWHILE, HE'S ON A BOAT Tiger Woods may be viewing a surprise appearance on Saturday Night Live as the best way to mend his image, according to MSNBC. "He's a little incredulous at the way he's being judged," a source says. "He thinks his golf game should be all people care about. If he went on SNL it would definitely change the conversation." Meanwhile, his yacht, Privacy, has set sail, possibly with Woods on it. "Tiger's boat Privacy has been docked at Old Port Cove in North Palm Beach for more than a week," a source tells People magazine. "On Saturday morning, after stocking up on provisions from Costco, the boat left town."



METRO NEWS SERVICES

Celebrity tweets

Josh Groban doesn't want to procrastinate alone, Lady Gaga is worried about the revellers at her show, Katy Perry drives a stake through the vampire rumours, and Russell Brand is going mad with power.

- @joshgroban Anyone else saving christmas shopping for 4 pm on thurs?
- @ladygaga on a scale of 1 to 10 exactly HOW intoxicated are you in the crowd. PLEASE don't faint in crowd tonight little monsters, it distracts me :)
- @katyperry Read a bunch of yesterdays-news-BULLOCKS. Ppl should know by now that I don't do vampires, but I do, DO @rustyrockets. Don't get it TWISTED!
- @rustyrockets I just read that my tweets are the 3rd most influential in Britain. I will only use this power for good. Now send photos of your sex organs..

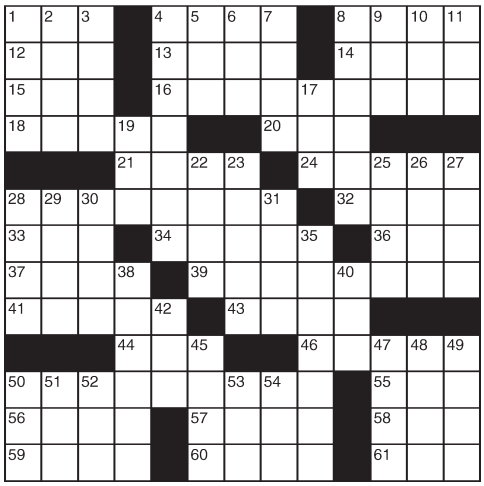


METRO WORLD NEWS

The Weather Network ©The Weather Network 2009
Today 90% Rain and snow 2°/ -4°
Thursday 40% Rain or snow showers 1° / -4°
Friday 40% Flurries 1° / -3°
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Take Five



ACROSS

ACROSS
1 Massachusetts cape
4 Eager
8 React in horror
12 Lawyers' org.
13 Baseball team
14 Church section
15 Part of H.R.H., at times
16 "The Clue in the Crossword Cipher" solver
18 Asian leader who inspired a jacket style
20 Small barrel
21 "Oh, woe!"
24 Antitoxin
28 Tapped
32 Ripped
33 Tatter
34 Binge
36 Past
37 Bit for Fermi
39 Patron of Scotland
41 Foundation
43 Not pizzicato
44 Slight application
46 Friars Club honor
50 "The Price Is Right" host
55 Scrooge's cry
56 Tittle
57 Unmacho type
58 Work with
59 Vacillate
60 Lummox
61 "Honor — father ..."

DOWN

1 Songwriter Sammy
2 Theater trophy
3 Morse's T
4 Ring
5 By way of
6 Hostel
7 Ship's floor
8 Thingie
9 Springtime abbr.
10 Away from NNW
11 Church perch
17 "Absolutely"
19 Uncooked
22 iPhone downloads
23 In a way, slangily
25 Bellow
26 Incite
27 Cat call
28 Hardly colorful
29 — -tat-tat
30 Hollywood clashers
31 Approach
35 Put into code
38 Carnival area
40 Scooby- —
42 Pouch
45 Cry loudly
47 Touch
48 Obi or cummerbund
49 Yon folks
50 Insult
51 Tier
52 Greek vowel
53 "Flying Down to —"
54 Ostrich's cousin

Sudoku

For more/less challenging Sudoku puzzles, visit metronews.ca

HOW TO PLAY: Digits 1 through 9 will appear once in each zone – one zone is an outlined 3x3 grid within the larger puzzle grid. There are nine zones in the puzzle. Do not enter a digit into a box if it already appears elsewhere in the same zone, row across or column down the entire puzzle.

	4							2
		9	1					
2		8		7	4			5
					3		8	1
		4		1		7		
6	3		8					
9			7	5		8		3
					6	9		
8							5	

PREVIOUS DAY'S CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS:



4	5	3	7	6	2	1	9	8
2	9	6	1	4	8	7	5	3
7	8	1	5	3	9	6	4	2
6	2	8	3	9	5	4	7	1
3	4	5	8	7	1	2	6	9
1	7	9	6	2	4	3	8	5
8	3	4	2	5	7	9	1	6
9	1	2	4	8	6	5	3	7
5	6	7	9	1	3	8	2	4

On the web

For more games and 60 additional daily cartoon strips, visit metronews.ca



Metro Recipe of the Day



Pan-fried Chicken with Mushrooms and Blueberries

INGREDIENTS:

1 tbsp (15 ml) all-purpose flour
4 skinless chicken breast fillets
2 tbsp (25 ml) olive oil
3 strips bacon, chopped
1/2 lb (250 g) chestnut mushrooms, sliced
1 tbsp (15 ml) Dijon mustard
7 oz (200 g) blueberries
Juice of 1/2 lemon
3 tbsp (45 ml) finely chopped fresh parsley

METHOD:

1. Put flour into shallow dish and season well, then spread out. Add chicken breasts and turn to coat. Shake off excess.
2. Heat oil in frying pan over medium-high heat. Add chicken, reduce heat to medium and cook until well browned underneath. Turn over to brown other side. Pierce middle of one breast with point of knife to check that meat is no longer pink.
3. Transfer chicken to serving dish. Add bacon to pan and cook, stirring, until cooked and fat runs out. Add mushrooms and continue to cook over fairly high heat, stirring, 2 minutes.
4. Add mustard to pan and stir with mushrooms and bacon. Gently stir in blueberries. Add lemon juice, stir and immediately remove pan from heat.
5. Sprinkle in parsley, then spoon mushrooms and blueberries over chicken and serve.

SERVES 4

rd.ca
For nutritional information on this and other great recipes, go to **rd.ca** or check out **Key Ingredients in this month's Reader's Digest, on newsstands now!**


Horoscopes by Sally Brompton

sallybrompton.com For Sally's expanded daily and weekend horoscopes, visit metronews.ca

ARIES ♈
MARCH 21-APRIL 20
You may have bitten off a bit more than you can chew but there is no need to panic because in a matter of days you will get your second wind.

TAURUS ♉
APRIL 21-MAY 21
You may be tempted to put off finishing something that has begun to take up a lot of time but considering the effort, that would be a waste.

GEMINI ♊
MAY 22-JUNE 21
It is of the utmost importance that you keep your thoughts positive, even though a number of negative things appear to be happening in your life.

CANCER ♋
JUNE 22-JULY 22
A relationship that has been through a tough time of late will get easier for both of you when love planet Venus moves into your opposite sign.

LEO ♌
JULY 23-AUG 23
The problem you are grappling with has a simple solution but you seem unable to see it because you have convinced yourself that there isn't one.

VIRGO ♍
AUG 24-SEPT 22
Cut back on your commitments. Do fewer things for other people. That might sound selfish but you have been giving too much of yourself.

LIBRA ♎
SEPT 23-OCT 23
What other people want is irrelevant. It would appear that someone has been playing on your feelings to further their own position.

SCORPIO ♏
OCT 24-NOV 22
Something that has caused you a great deal of mental and emotional anguish will resolve itself to your satisfaction today.

SAGITTARIUS ♐
NOV 23-DEC 21
You may not want to admit defeat but it seems you have no choice in the matter. Push your ego to one side and don't think it reflects badly on you.

CAPRICORN ♑
DEC 22-JAN 20
If you focus your mind too intently in one particular direction today you may miss out on something even more important, and enjoyable.

AQUARIUS ♒
JAN 21-FEB 18
Cosmic activity in the most sensitive area of your chart is making you feel vulnerable at the moment but there is no need to fear the worst.

PISCES ♓
FEB 19-MARCH 20
Someone will say something less than friendly to you or about you today and you won't be too happy about it.

This day in history

1954: The first human kidney transplant is performed by Dr. Joseph E. Murray at Peter Bent Brigham Hospital in Boston, Massachusetts.
1970: The North Tower of the World Trade Center in Manhattan, New York City is topped out at 1,368 feet (417 m), making it the tallest building in the world.
1972: The 16 survivors of the Andes flight disaster are rescued after 73 days, having survived by cannibalism.
1986: Voyager, piloted by Dick Rutan and Jeana Yeager, lands at Edwards Air Force Base in California becoming the first aircraft to fly non-stop around the world.

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